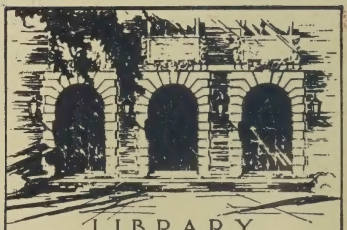

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MOLIÈRE

LE MISANTHROPE

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EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION,
NOTES AND VOCABULARY

BY
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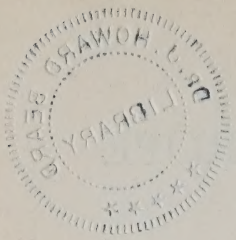

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TO

MY WIFE

. . . . . .

Madame, cent vertus ornent votre beauté
Et je n'ai vu qu'en vous de la sincérité.
Alceste to "la sincère Éliante."

(Le Misanthrope, Act V, verses 1785–1786)

PREFACE

THE text of the present edition is based upon that of the standard edition of Molière by Despois-Mesnard-Desfeuilles contained in Volume V of their monumental *Oeuvres de Molière* 1873–1900. The stage-directions and the plan of the stage are taken from an edition of *Le Misanthrope* in the series *Théâtre Classique Populaire, Edition de la Comédie Française publiée sous le haut patronage de M. Jules Claretie de l'Académie Française,* (Paris, Librairie Universelle). The *Notice* of this edition is by M. Raphaël Duflos, *sociétaire* of the *Comédie Française,* and the stage-directions embody the best traditions of that theatre in the presentation of the play.

In the Bibliography will be found, separately listed, the various editions of *Le Misanthrope* which have been freely used in the preparation of the present work.

The following translations have occasionally been helpful: Charles Heron Wall (*Bohn's Standard Library*); Henri Van Laun (*Edinburgh, William Patterson*); Curtis Hidden Page (*G. P. Putnam's Sons*). The translation in *The Modern Library* is that of Van Laun; that in the *Little Blue Books* of the Haldeman-Julius Co. is by an unknown writer who often shows considerable ingenuity in difficult passages. The translation into German by Ludwig Fulda (*J. G. Cotta, Stuttgart & Berlin*) is uniformly excellent.

In many cases the criticisms found in the Introduction and in the Notes are the result of discussions of *Le Misan-*

thrope in classes at the University of Illinois over a period of twenty years, more particularly during the Summer Session of 1925.

T. E. O.

URBANA, ILLINOIS
October, 1927

INTRODUCTION

MOLIÈRE wrote *Le Misanthrope* in his full maturity. By many competent critics it is considered his greatest play, and the most enthusiastic have even gone so far as to say that it alone outweighs all the others put together. Grimarest, his earliest biographer, quotes Molière as declaring his own preference for it, and to Boileau its authorship is Molière's chief claim to glory. It is the one play to which we wish that he had written a sequel, so absorbed have we become in following the fortunes of the main characters, Alceste and Célimène. To many critics *Le Misanthrope* stirs the emotions more than any other comedy of its time, for the author has penetrated very deeply to the human heart. Even if we join other critics and admit *L'Avare* and *Le Tartuffe* to an equal position, we place the masterpiece in an enviable rank.

In *L'Avare* and *Le Tartuffe* Molière is primarily concerned in holding up to scorn a single vice, avarice in the former, religious hypocrisy in the latter. He desires to show their dire effects upon the happiness of a family. In *Le Misanthrope* we have no family life, and we are shown the wide-spread evil of social hypocrisy, including religious hypocrisy in the person of Arsinoé. In *L'Avare* and *Le Tartuffe* tragedy is imminent, but is averted by a somewhat forced ending which restores happiness to all who deserve it. In *Le Misanthrope* the ending remains essentially tragic, because we realize that Alceste in all probability can never be happy when we consider how profoundly his already sombre disposition has been affected by his sad experiences. We rejoice in the happy outcome of *L'Avare* and *Le Tartuffe*, but the closing words of Alceste leave us in no such mood.

The protagonists of *L'Avare* and *Le Tartuffe* are relatively simple characters. Their vices are obvious and their characters are utterly unable to arouse our sympathy. Once introduced, the snake-like Tartuffe and the miserly Harpagon remain essentially the same throughout the play, and presumably beyond the play. They do not change or develop, nor does the attitude of the audience toward them vary in any large degree. Not so with Alceste. When he first appears we do not care for him, indeed we may even dislike him, but as the play unfolds his complex character and brings it in conflict with those about him, we are gradually made aware that he has much to justify his conduct. He wins first our interest, then our respect, and after that our approval. As we become increasingly aware of his keen suffering, we begin to give him our sympathy, and only the most callous will fail to share his sadness as the curtain descends for the last time. For Harpagon the miser, and for the pious fraud Tartuffe, the most contemptible character in all Molière, we feel nothing but aversion. We may laugh at Harpagon; we shudder at Tartuffe. Our sympathies are all with the families whose peace and happiness are endangered. Neither of these two plays presents a problem that provokes much discussion, nor can either play offer any large variety of interpretation to the actors. There is really only one way to play these two comedies.

This is not the case with *Le Misanthrope*. It has been successfully presented in many ways. Its message has been different to succeeding generations. The seventeenth century appreciated the play as an accurate characterization of itself. It was amused at the futile efforts of Alceste to combat the manners and customs of the day. Hence it saw in the play chiefly a comedy of manners. With the growth of eighteenth-century sentimentality and of belief in the perfectibility of man the point of view changed accordingly. Jean Jacques Rousseau waxed indignant because he thought that the righteous Alceste had been unduly made an object of ridicule. Devoid

of a sense of humor himself, he was utterly unable to see any humorous aspect in Alceste. In still later times the tragedy latent in the play was slowly revealed, aided by the inevitable comparison of Alceste with Molière himself, the sad features of whose life had become better understood. *Le Misanthrope* then seemed to be a sentimental drama, and Alceste became identified almost entirely with Molière, while Célimène was similarly transformed into a complete picture of his wife. In more recent days again, a still different interpretation has arisen. The eminent actress Mlle Cecile Sorel of the *Comédie Française* played Célimène with such skill and sympathy that she, rather than Alceste, became the character in whose fate the audience was chiefly interested. Alceste sank to a secondary position. While such an interpretation seems to us unjustified, since otherwise Molière would have entitled the play differently, yet the fact remains that this manner of playing proved possible and most successful.

It was stated above that neither *L'Avare* nor *Le Tartuffe* presents a problem that can excite much discussion. There is but one way to look upon the evils there revealed. *Le Misanthrope* does, however, present a problem that has ever engaged the mind of man, and it is chiefly for that reason that the present editor joins those critics who give this play the primacy. This problem is no less than that of evil itself. The opening verses state the problem at once. Alceste appears as the staunch champion of truth and sincerity, and the indignant enemy of all who prefer or who practise the lying and hypocrisy so prevalent in society then, — and now. His indignation becomes so hot that he exclaims:

> . . . Je hais tous les hommes:
> Les uns parce qu'ils sont méchants et malfaisants,
> Et les autres, pour être aux méchants complaisants
> Et n'avoir pas pour eux ces haines vigoureuses
> Que doit donner le vice aux âmes vertueuses.
>
> (Verses 118–122)

All through the play he stands, a lonely, heroic, even tragic, figure, fighting single-handed a losing battle with evil in its insidious forms of lying, flattery, hypocrisy and scandal-mongering; he is deceived, humiliated, betrayed, by the falseness of those about him. He is doomed to defeat from the beginning, so strong are the forces against him. It is worthy of note that the tragic motif reappears almost every time that Alceste speaks, the comic note being heard chiefly when the other characters speak. One woman character alone really understands and sympathizes with him, the "sincère Eliante." She might have made him a happy man and soothed him with her love. It is, however, the irony of fate that Alceste loves another, her exact opposite and his, the fascinating but faithless Célimène. He battles to save her from the evil influences that surround her, but because of her inability to understand and appreciate him, he fails. She does not love him deeply enough to accept his condition that they retire from a corrupt and frivolous world and live each for the other. When she refuses, his indignation again overpowers him and he rejects with scorn her compromise to wed him and continue her former life. He is overwhelmed with grief as Célimène leaves him, and as he witnesses, in powerful contrast to his own sorrow, the happy betrothal of his friends Philinte and Eliante. Utterly disillusioned, having lost not only faith in humanity, but all else that he held dear, he utters, as the curtain falls, the tragic words:

> Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices,
> Je vais sortir d'un gouffre où triomphent les vices,
> Et chercher sur la terre un endroit écarté
> Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté.

The tragedy contained in such a plan is obvious. Alceste has lost everything except his honor and his high sense of moral values. We agree with him that he should have the liberty to continue as "un homme d'honneur," but we do not share his

conviction that the sole way to do this is to separate himself from the world. It is entirely human that Alceste in such a crisis should see no other solution of his life, for he is blinded by his hatred of evil and his passion for good.

Granted then that there is in *Le Misanthrope* this problem of evil, does Molière solve it? Does he even leave with us any definite suggestion for its solution? There are some verses spoken by Philinte which might lead one to think that Molière approved his indifferent and supine attitude. While admitting the existence of evil in all its varied forms, Philinte seems to consider it inevitable and perhaps even necessary, when he says:

> Tous ces défauts humains nous donnent, dans la vie,
> Des moyens d'exercer notre philosophie;
> C'est le plus bel emploi que trouve la vertu,
> Et si de probité tout était revêtu,
> Si tous les cœurs étaient francs, justes et dociles,
> La plupart des vertus nous seraient inutiles . . .
>
> (Verses 1561–1566)

Now it is to be remarked that Philinte has just uttered a thought more discouraging and more misanthropic than any spoken by Alceste; furthermore that Philinte does not suffer from any causes, as far as the play reveals, and hence has not the same reasons as Alceste for being pessimistic.

Earlier in the play Philinte had given an even more hopeless picture of mankind than any uttered by Alceste:

> Oui, je vois ces défauts dont votre âme murmure,
> Comme vices unis à l'humaine nature;
> Et mon esprit enfin n'est pas plus offensé
> De voir un homme fourbe, injuste, intéressé,
> Que de voir des vautours affamés de carnage,
> Des singes malfaisants et des loups pleins de rage.
>
> (Verses 173–178)

Surely such a negative and hopeless attitude cannot have been that advocated by Molière whose life was largely spent in the definitely acknowledged plan of correcting mankind by forcing them to laugh at their own weaknesses, faults, and follies. The following lines spoken by Philinte seem especially inconsistent with Molière's avowed purpose:

> Il faut fléchir au temps sans obstination;
> Et c'est une folie à nulle autre seconde
> De vouloir se mêler de corriger le monde.
>
> (Verses 156–158)

On the other hand is the situation any better or any more hopeful if we adopt the opposite extreme of Alceste and ride full-tilt against the evil that infests society? The outcome of the play shows clearly that Alceste's method has failed. No one is any better than before, and the two leading characters are far unhappier. Alceste is broken in heart and in spirit. In hopeless disgust he withdraws from the world, leaving it to continue its wickedness. Surely such a running away is no solution whatever of the problem of evil. Rather is it a selfish and somewhat cowardly evasion, as well as a bitter confession of defeat. Such cannot have been the solution that Molière meant, if he meant any at all. The method of Alceste, as long as he used it, is too fierce; it is destructive rather than helpful and constructive; it does not prove efficacious, because men can never be won by such bluntness.

Strange to say, it is in the words of the otherwise frivolous Célimène that we find a suggestion of what may have been Molière's attitude, at least in large measure. Célimène is in the midst of a bitter word-contest with Arsinoé who has come to reprove her in the frank manner advocated by Alceste in the first act. The whole scene is a deliciously absurd illustration of the folly of such a method. In her reply Célimène repays her obnoxious visitor with liberal interest, declaring to Arsinoé that certain persons "d'un très-rare mérite" had said:

. . . que vous feriez bien
De prendre moins de soin des actions des autres,
Et de vous mettre un peu plus en peine des vôtres;
Qu'on doit se regarder soi-même un fort long temps,
Avant que de songer à condamner les gens;
Qu'il faut mettre le poids d'une vie exemplaire
Dans les corrections qu'aux autres on veut faire;
Et qu'encor vaut-il mieux s'en remettre, au besoin,
A ceux à qui le ciel en a commis le soin.

(Verses 948–956)

This passage is not unlike the words of Cléante, the "raisonneur" of *Le Tartuffe* when speaking of truly religious people:

Ce ne sont point du tout fanfarons de vertu;
. . . . . .
Ils ne censurent point toutes nos actions;
Ils trouvent trop d'orgueil dans ces corrections;
Et laissant la fierté des paroles aux autres,
C'est par leurs actions qu'ils reprennent les nôtres.
L'apparence du mal a chez eux peu d'appui,
Et leur âme est portée à juger bien d'autrui.
. . . . . .
On les voit, pour tous soins, se mêler de bien vivre;
Jamais contre un pécheur ils n'ont d'acharnement;
Ils attachent leur haine au péché seulement,
Et ne veulent point prendre, avec un zèle extrême,
Les intérêts du ciel plus qu'il ne veut lui-même.

(*Le Tartuffe*, verses 388–402)

Thus the problem of evil becomes one of education, of example, of the slow evolution of humanity toward the good. Surely the world will never grow better if all men of high character, frank, just, sincere, honorable, like Alceste at his best, withdraw from all social contacts. Society would then be abandoned to those of less high standards, and could only grow increasingly worse. Somewhere in between the agressive-

ness of Alceste and the passivity of Philinte lies the path of progress, whose sign post,

> La parfaite raison fuit tout extrémité
> (*Le Misanthrope*, 151)

is unquestionably Molière's own belief. This wise principle is the very essence of his moral and social code. In all his plays he ridicules only those who fail to obey its mandate. All the "raisonneurs" of his plays, who are his spokesmen, conform to this profound truth. It is precisely here that Molière becomes one of the greatest teachers of all time, not by direct preaching, but by a truthful picture of the failure of men to follow so simple and so wise a counsel.

A curious feature of *Le Misanthrope* is the total absence of the family as such. There is no mention of father, mother, brother, sister. This differentiates this play from most of the others of Molière in which the family and its concerns have a very large place. In *Le Misanthrope* the closest kinship is the cousinly relation of Célimène and Eliante which might just as well have been omitted. It is there, apparently, for the sole purpose of explaining why both lived under the same roof. It would seem, therefore, as if the author had purposely excluded the family in order to concentrate all his attention upon the individual member of society. Again, with the sole exception of Arsinoé, who is of somewhat uncertain age, all the characters are young. Aside from Alceste, the protagonist, and "la sincère Eliante," these young people have to all appearances no ideals other than social success and the easiest way to secure and maintain it. Excepting again Alceste and Eliante all these characters are liars and hypocrites in varying degree, and even Alceste equivocates somewhat in the sonnet scene of Act I. We wonder whether the author's intention, in thus choosing young people without ideals, was not to accentuate the hopelessness of a solution of the problem of evil. In his other plays it is usually youth which upholds the banner of hope and of

progress, whilst old people are depicted as beyond redemption, and become the butt of ridicule. In *Le Misanthrope* youth holds no banner at all. The only exceptions are again Alceste and Eliante. No doubt Molière desired to show the depressing effect of the cynicism and indifference, so prevalent in the higher society of the day, upon young men and young women. If youth are already of this character, where indeed is there any hope of betterment?

It is also worthy of remark that these young people are all of the highest social class. They are noble, wealthy, and have access to the court. All are aristocratic and fashionable idlers. They have no occupation except the gossip of the drawing-room. The only members of a lower class are the servants who here have very subordinate parts. We find no keen-witted family servants like Toinette of *Le Malade Imaginaire* or Dorine of *Le Tartuffe* who show themselves more intelligent than their masters. Such servants would have been out of place in the aristocratic picture of *Le Misanthrope* with its lack of family life. Thus satire is directed exclusively at the highest social class. Must we not admire Molière for venturing such bold delineation? Have we not here an additional proof of his favor with his royal master Louis XIV who was apparently not averse to seeing those about him ridiculed and humiliated?

Against this distressing and discouraging background of selfishness and social hypocrisy there is drawn in sharpest contrast the picture of the unselfish and upright Alceste who becomes the victim of circumstances that he will not, or cannot, control. Because of his high ideals and his exaggerated manner of upholding them, he is made ridiculous before everybody. Unable or unwilling to admit that he is right, they laugh at him. Owing to his sincerity in the sonnet scene of Act I, Alceste estranges one who might have become his friend, had he been willing to adopt the conventional and easy-going standard of friendship current then, and now. The quarrel thus started might have resulted in a duel, had it not been officially smothered by the

Marshalls' Court whose duty it was to settle affairs of honor among noblemen. All this time Alceste is sued at law by a Tartuffian type of trickster who, by using the corrupt methods of the day, wins the suit and twenty thousand francs of Alceste's money. In addition to all this distress Alceste is profoundly in love with a spoiled child of fashion who is an incorrigible coquette. He tries repeatedly but vainly to make her appreciate his deep love, and to win at least some semblance of affection in return, but, although her words lead him to believe that she loves him, her acts belie her. At the end she is unmasked through the jealousy of her suitors whom she had thus far cleverly played one against the other. Alceste alone remains when all the others abandon her. He pardons her for her deceit toward himself, but she refuses the one condition for their marriage that he feels it necessary to exact, that of retiring from the frivolous society that has spoiled her. Alceste then rejects her, realizing at last that she is incapable of loving him, and that marriage under such conditions would be fatal. The play ends with Alceste's defeat and despair. He resolves to abandon society and live by himself. The only ray of hope, upon which have been built the several sequels by later authors, lies in Philinte's words to Eliante, the last verses of the play:

> Allons, madame, allons employer toute chose,
> Pour rompre le dessein que son cœur se propose.

Surely of such material is a tragedy made. And yet *Le Misanthrope* remains a comedy! Why?

Because with consummate skill Molière has woven into this remarkable story humorous elements that relieve the tension in almost every scene. To begin with, it is chiefly the petty sins and not the tragic vices that are attacked. Petty sins, however prevalent and however distressing, are not the proper material for tragedy. We are shown a slice of society of the time, (for that matter, of all time), with its thin veneer of polish. This veneer cracks and breaks when exposed to unusual

pressure. These breakings of the veneer are humorous. They reveal the weakness of human nature and social convention. Hence even the bitterness of the scene between Arsinoé and Célimène (Act III, Scene iv) becomes comedy of a high order. The veneer cracks again when the discomfited suitors read the letters in which Célimène picks them to pieces so cleverly. We laugh at their discomfiture, and feel that they richly deserve it. We laugh also at Célimène whose frankness in the letters causes all the trouble, for it is another illustration that frankness, as advocated by Alceste, cannot accomplish what he maintained it could. Even the tense scene between Alceste and Célimène (Act IV, Scene iii), tragic though it be to him, is not devoid of rich humor, for it is a true picture of what inevitably happens when two such characters meet under such circumstances. It is a frailty of mankind to see humor in the success of a coquette who can so brilliantly turn the tables upon an exasperated and angry lover. Mankind is still prone to smile even at the cleverness of deceit, especially when practised by a beautiful woman. The sympathy of the audience is at least divided under such circumstances, since the victory of Célimène usually finds approval with many of her sex. Indeed many of his own sex will admit that Alceste's weakness exposes him to criticism, and that his methods of forcing Célimène to a confession are not above reproach.

In other parts of the play, also, we feel that Alceste is not without blame. The utter frankness on which he insists is not possible in any world made up of average human beings. In varying degree according to each person's judgment Alceste is extreme and eccentric. Although actuated by a high ideal of truth and virtue, he is, because of the very exaggeration of his method of attaining that ideal, abnormal, not well-balanced. He lacks good judgment. In short he is off-centre and, therefore, departs from that wise and happy medium which always characterizes Molière's philosophy. We cannot agree that Alceste's method is correct, and when he or others try it, we

await results that are bound to be amusing, because the method cannot work. We may, to be sure, admit that his abnormality is headed in the right direction, and differs in that important respect from the usual abnormalities that Molière depicts, — affectation, pedantry, ignorance, vanity, religious hypocrisy, avarice, hypochondria, selfishness in its many forms, — all of which point in the wrong direction and are hence more harmful to society. Nevertheless an abnormality remains an abnormality and singles out its possessor, exposing him often to ridicule. Moreover, like most abnormal persons, Alceste does not realize that he is such. He remains, therefore, a true comic character. He becomes angry when others laugh at him (see instances verses 105–110, 203–205, 413–414, and especially 773–774). He becomes angry whenever others differ from his opinion (see especially the whole of Act I, also 659 ff., 760 ff., 1234–1244). His language is then intemperate and extreme (see under the note to verse 25 the frequency of his use of "morbleu"). Now anger is amusing when its cause does not seem sufficiently motivated. In the tense quarrel-scene with Célimène the anger of Alceste is justified, and thus is no longer amusing, but elsewhere we feel that his wrath is not warranted and hence his excessive outbursts cause amusement. Moreover his efforts to force all others to his standard seem preposterous and, therefore, expose him to ridicule.

Nor is this all. Such frankness as Alceste advocates would endanger the peace of society. Society cannot exist without forbearance and charity toward our fellow men. These qualities Alceste does not possess. Not only does he fail to discriminate between smaller and greater sins, but he makes the far worse mistake of hating the sinner as bitterly as he hates the sin. To that extent he is not in harmony with that standard of human conduct which we are prone to call Christian. Indeed he does not even conform to the ideal of the "honnête homme," the perfect, well-poised gentleman of the seventeenth century. He lacks tact, self-control, and penetration. He is so filled with

his own point of view and so insistent upon it, that he is intolerant of any other. He becomes self-righteous and even vain. At times he has the "holier-than-thou" attitude of the Pharisee who thanked God that he "was not as other men." Were we all as extreme as Alceste, social life would be impossible. Constant attack and criticism of others would kill love, breed hatred, and make the world a moral chaos. When a single individual thus defies the world, he may sometimes be heroic, but he quite as often runs the risk of being ridiculous. Alceste is both, the proportion of each quality varying in each person's judgment of him. Rostand's Cyrano de Bergerac has much of Alceste's idealism. He too defies the world, but he is not ridiculous.

Many other comic touches abound in the play. Two attempts to practise the principles of Alceste result in humorous failure. One is his own effort, first to avoid frankness with Oronte in Act I, Scene ii, and then to use it. A quarrel results that has much to do with the subsequent plot. Even richer in humor is Arsinoé's attempt to tell Célimène her faults in Act III, Scene iv, for the clever Célimène turns the tables completely, and has the last and best word. Here likewise bitterness is engendered that shapes the later plot. We should also include the frank letters of Célimène that cause her undoing in Act V. Nor should we forget the several places where Alceste himself is frankly told of his faults, and gets angry. There is much humor in the constant effort of Alceste to pin Célimène down and to come to an understanding with her. Each of these efforts results in failure because of various interruptions, either engineered or welcomed by Célimène, which enable her to escape. She at least will have none of his frankness, and, therefore, he fails. These contests between them are highly diverting. Célimène's adroitness at this hide-and-seek game provokes our laughter. Molière has given to these several efforts of Alceste a clever crescendo that is most effective. In Act IV we have the best scene of all, and one of the best in world

comedy. It is the longest dialogue between Alceste and Célimène. Beginning with violent recrimination on his part, it ends with her twisting him completely around her finger. There follows the only low-comedy scene of the play with the sudden appearance of Alceste's servant, Du Bois, an interlude that comes as a welcome relief to the tense scene that had preceded. Alceste is again forced to take a sudden, and hence comic, departure. In Act V is Alceste's final attempt to reach an understanding with Célimène, but it too is a failure because she is unwilling to accept his terms. While this scene is a close approach to tragedy, since, for Alceste, it is tragic, yet the fact remains that anyone, who thus repeatedly fails to attain his objective, has become by virtue of that fact alone an object of comic interest to the average audience.

Of the twenty-three scenes of the play Alceste and Célimène are on-stage together in thirteen; Alceste is on-stage with other characters in six scenes; Célimène with other characters in two. Thus they are before us, either together or individually, in twenty-one out of the total of twenty-three. This is significant for it shows the great importance that Molière attached to their being so constantly present. A similar result is seen when we note that Alceste has in round numbers 740 verses of dialogue and Célimène 341. Together they have thus 1081 verses out of the total dialogue of 1808. This leaves only 727 verses for the other nine characters, to which must be added the two prose letters of Act V. Of the two remaining scenes in which neither of the two main characters is present, the most amusing is the dialogue between the two petty marquis, Acaste and Clitandre, at the opening of Act III. Here Acaste paints himself in such vainglorious colors and is so confident of his success with Célimène that we enjoy all the more her subsequent puncturing of his bubble of vanity. The other remaining scene is Act IV, Scene i, the most quiet in the play, given over to an analysis of the character of Alceste by Philinte and Éliante. The scene also serves to bring these two closer together and to prepare

their betrothal at the end. Above all, however, this gentle scene, devoid of any direct humor, is an excellent foil in its calmness to the tempestuous scenes that follow.

Structurally *Le Misanthrope* is perfect. Every scene contributes to the smooth and logical development of the plot. Not one could be eliminated without seriously disturbing its progress. The play is absolutely faithful to the unity of its theme. The premises, once stated in the excellent exposition, — the dialogue between only two characters, Alceste and Philinte, — lead with complete logic to the unescapable conclusion. There is perfect balance and perfect unity. Each bit of dialogue, each character, fits with precision into this unity. No digressive incidents disturb it. There are no sudden surprises, no *coups de théâtre*, no theatrical tricks of any kind. Incidentally we may note the complete absence of monologues; also the striking fact that of the 1808 verses, nearly 1,100 are dialogue between two persons only. In no play of the author is the motivation of exit and entrance more natural, or the principle of foil more striking. Even the sudden entrance of Du Bois and his comical scene with Alceste are highly effective, for all this is not merely a welcome relief from the strong scene that preceded, but it also reveals Alceste from quite another angle, his relation to a social inferior against whose stupidity his suppressed anger explodes in a perfectly natural manner. Aside from this one scene the uniform level of high comedy is rigorously maintained throughout.

To many persons the most striking feature of *Le Misanthrope* is its intimate connection with the author's own life. How intimate this is, has been a subject of much discussion among critics. They are agreed, however, that Molière's unhappy marriage in 1662 at forty years of age with Armande Béjart, a woman half his years, must have served as the basis of the play. The piquancy of this situation is greatly enhanced by the fact that Molière himself created the part of Alceste, whilst his wife (of all women!) played opposite him as Célimène.

There is no doubt that Célimène represents quite accurately Armande Béjart, and that Alceste is a close approximation to Molière, at least as far as his love for Célimène is concerned. It is quite likely also that, in some degree, Alceste's misanthropy represents one of the aspects of Molière's nature. For a long time Molière had been in ill health, and was worn out by the exacting duties of his three-fold profession of author, actor, and manager. He suffered much in his moral nature also because of the attacks of his many enemies, especially those of the bigots upon *Le Tartuffe* and *Don Juan*. Nor should we forget the treacherous conduct of Racine whose then immature genius he had so befriended. In 1665 Racine had taken his *Alexandre* away from Molière's company and entrusted it to their rivals of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*. In addition he was engaged in enticing away to these rivals Molière's best actress, Mlle DuParc, who created the rôle of Andromaque in November, 1667. Above all, however, should we recall Molière's actual quarrels with his wife. Their estrangement is visible as early as the first production of *L'Ecole des Femmes* in December, 1662, scarcely ten months after the marriage. In 1664 they were almost at the point of separation. His sufferings were intense for he still loved her deeply, and he could endure neither the thought of separation nor her coldness to him and her frivolous conduct with others. In all this it is not necessary to assume that Molière's misanthropy was equal to Alceste's. Molière had many admirable elements in his nature that came to his rescue. Besides he was far too busy a man to continue long in such a mood, nor could he ever have been the shrewd courtier and the beloved leader of his company of actors that he was, if he had had Alceste's temperament in any acute or even chronic degree. But it is quite within the range of probability that Alceste is Molière in his moments of deeper sadness and bitter discouragement, which became increasingly frequent from the time of his marriage to the end of his life. Some have suggested that a combination of Alceste and Philinte is Molière,

but, as far as misanthropy is concerned, is not Philinte's opinion of mankind even more pessimistic and hopeless than that of Alceste?

It is beside the point to state that *Le Misanthrope* has little bearing upon Molière's life because he had already treated in 1661 in the unsuccessful *Don Garcie de Navarre* the problem of jealousy, and had even transferred to the later play many of its verses. He also inserted some in *Amphitryon*, 1668 and in *Les Femmes Savantes*, 1672. These transfers occur in the closing acts of *Le Misanthrope* and are merely one proof among others of the haste of composition. He was perfectly justified in doing this, for the earlier play had never been published (it was printed only in 1682) and he greatly improved these verses when he borrowed them. The great fact remains that he *did* return to the subject of jealousy, and that above all he *added thereto* the subject of unrequited love. Moreover it is of importance to note that in *Don Garcie de Navarre* jealousy is proved to be unjustified, whereas in *Le Misanthrope* Alceste's condemnation of Célimène is completely warranted. It is this motif of unrequited love that makes the play the closest approach to tragedy of all Molière, and brings it very near to the tragedies of Racine with whom this was to become the prevailing theme. Indeed there are not lacking those who declare that *Le Misanthrope* was an important influence in leading Racine in this direction.

Moreover Alceste is Molière in other respects than misanthropy. Like Alceste, Molière spoke the truth boldly and fearlessly. His attacks upon all the vices of the day prove this conclusively. Like Alceste also Molière suffered for telling the truth. He made many enemies who never let him alone. They even pursued him with their hatred beyond his death. Above all, however, like Alceste, Molière loved profoundly a woman who betrayed him. For Armande Béjart, his protégée, Molière did everything. He made her the successful actress that she became. In like manner Alceste declares that he would do

everything for his belovèd. Can we not believe that we hear Molière speaking his own heart to Armande, when Alceste says to Célimène:

> Ah! rien n'est comparable à mon amour extrême;
> Et, dans l'ardeur qu'il a de se montrer à tous,
> Il va jusqu'à former des souhaits contre vous.
> Oui, je voudrais qu'aucun ne vous trouvât aimable,
> Que vous fussiez réduite en un sort misérable;
> Que le ciel, en naissant, ne vous eût donné rien;
> Que vous n'eussiez ni rang, ni naissance, ni bien;
> Afin que de mon cœur l'éclatant sacrifice
> Vous pût d'un pareil sort réparer l'injustice,
> Et que j'eusse la joie et la gloire, en ce jour,
> De vous voir tenir tout des mains de mon amour.
>
> (Verses 1422–1432)

And do we not detect the coldness, the apathy, the ingratitude of Armande, as well as her utter failure to understand or appreciate Molière, in Célimène's curt reply?

> C'est me vouloir du bien d'une étrange manière!
> Me préserve le ciel que vous ayez matière! . . .

THE CHARACTERS

In the preceding pages, while analyzing the play, we have necessarily discussed many aspects of the leading characters, Alceste and Célimène. There remain, however, certain features of each that demand attention. In addition the other characters should be described so as to show their interrelation and their share in developing the complete picture of this masterpiece. It should ever be borne in mind how constantly and effectively Molière uses the principle of foil or contrast between characters. In no play has he done this more brilliantly. For instance all the personages, except the unimportant Basque and "Le garde," are foils to Alceste in differing degree, bringing

out his character the more sharply. This is true even of his servant, Du Bois, who has a very distinct individuality despite his few lines.

We shall treat the characters in the order of their share of the dialogue as shown in the table on page liv.

Alceste

We have already seen that Alceste is a very complex character. With qualities that set him far above the average man, his faults are but the excess of these good qualities. It is to be noted that all three of the women in the play profess their interest in him, and their willingness to marry him.

Alceste lacks the saving grace of humor. We can no more think of his laughing than we can imagine mirthfulness in Tartuffe or Harpagon. This is perhaps Alceste's chief contrast with the character of Molière. Surely this great creator of mirth in others must have been full of it himself.

Fénelon and Rousseau are in error, however, when they declare that Molière in Alceste has made virtue ridiculous and even hateful. Fairer critics reply that to be ridiculous one must in some measure be humiliated. Alceste is not humiliated. He keeps his head high, his dignity complete, his principles intact, his soul clean. We may indeed laugh at some things he says and does, but we do not laugh at what he is. In the play itself the only ones who laugh at him are the scatter-brained marquis whose judgment no one could respect. Rousseau forgot his own principles in condemning Molière's Alceste. No one believed more firmly than Rousseau that society corrupted man. Did he fail to see that Alceste thought the same, and that he is the only real opponent of evil in the play? Were Alceste the virtuous puppet that Rousseau desired, he would have been far more ridiculous than he is. Saint-Marc-Girardin truthfully declares that "l'homme parfait n'a pas de place dans la comédie; c'est à peine s'il en a une dans le monde." Molière created in Alceste a real human being, not the impersonal ab-

straction and fantastic ideal of virtue that Rousseau would have him. Leys' opinion is, therefore, well justified: "Je ne sais si l'on trouverait au théâtre un caractère mieux composé que celui du Misanthrope."

Being so thoroughly human Alceste has his faults, but these hurt only himself. It is noticeable that Alceste is well aware of his limitations, even though he may not consider them such. To Oronte he declares:

> J'ai le défaut
> D'être un peu plus sincère en cela qu'il ne faut.
>
> (Verses 299–300)

and in answer to Oronte's boast that others have praised his poem, he says:

> C'est qu'ils ont l'art de feindre; et moi, je ne l'ai pas
>
> (Verse 422)

All through the play he is entirely conscious of his weakness and inconsistency in loving Célimène. See verses 225–233, 243–248, 514–524, and especially 1377–1382, 1415–1418, 1747–1756.

He knows that his anger sometimes gets the better of him, for he says to Philinte:

> Je n'ai point sur ma langue un assez grand empire;
> De ce que je dirais je ne répondrais pas,
> Et je me jetterais cent choses sur les bras.
>
> (Verses 1574–1576)

Particularly poignant is his increasing conviction that he is not well fitted to live happily with others. When Philinte tries to dispel this gloomy mood by suggesting that they visit Eliante he replies:

Non: de trop de souci je me sens l'âme émue.
Allez-vous-en la voir, et me laissez enfin
Dans ce petit coin sombre, avec mon noir chagrin.

(Verses 1582–1584)

There is no sadder line in the play than this last.

There is something of a hero of Corneille in Alceste in his will-power and his rigid adherence to an ideal. Yet there is also a protagonist of Racine in the extent to which he is swayed by his love. In the final, though costly, victory of his will lies the tragedy, a situation resembling the victory of Titus in Racine's *Bérénice*. Had Alceste continued in bondage to Célimène, he would have lost our respect and sympathy. Titus would have done the same, if he had surrendered to Bérénice.

It is impossible to give a final judgment of Alceste that shall satisfy everyone. Each one of us will have his own opinion, and this opinion in turn will vary as one grows in age and experience of life. It is likewise difficult to know what Molière's own view may have been. Eliante is probably his spokesman when she says:

Dans ses façons d'agir, il est fort singulier;
Mais j'en fais, je l'avoue, un cas particulier,
Et la sincérité dont son âme se pique
A quelque chose, en soi, de noble et d'héroïque.
C'est une vertu rare au siècle d'aujourd'hui,
Et je la voudrais voir partout comme chez lui.

(Verses 1163–1168)

Célimène

In the case of Célimène also a final judgment is difficult. Here again one is tempted, as one grows older, to be increasingly charitable. In so doing, one follows Alceste himself who blamed her surroundings, more than herself, for her faults. Here once more we are disposed to share the opinion of Eliante who wonders whether Célimène has yet found the man whom she can love:

Son cœur de ce qu'il sent n'est pas bien sûr lui-même;
Il aime quelquefois sans qu'il le sache bien,
Et croit aimer aussi parfois qu'il n'en est rien.

(Verses 1182–1184)

One queries why Molière represents her as a widow and so young a widow. She is only twenty. Perhaps he did this to give her greater knowledge of the world and to avoid any possibility of her being an unsophisticated girl. Yet she seems too young to be so clever. We wonder again what sort of experience she could have had in her marriage. It could hardly have been a happy one. She seems devoid of any other emotion than that produced by flattery and social success. She possesses everything that most women long for. She is young, beautiful, wealthy, of noble rank, and of the highest social standing. She is intelligent, and witty. She attracts and holds men. The best proof of this is Alceste's devotion to her. With the exception of Philinte, who is more wisely drawn to Eliante, all the men in the play are her suitors. Nevertheless her charms lack solidity. They are not tempered with qualities that inspire confidence and deep affection. We soon see that she is shallow and selfish, a sort of social butterfly, a product of a fashionable and artificial society from which she is incapable of detaching herself. She has no vision of life beyond the false glamour of her drawing-room. Here her fondness for clever gossip and scandalous attack brings her the applause of minds as shallow as her own. This applause has stifled any deeper womanly qualities that she may have possessed. She is the complete antithesis of her cousin Eliante and of Molière's ideal young woman, Henriette of *Les Femmes Savantes*.

Incapable of self-sacrifice herself, she is equally unable to appreciate this quality in others. This is the basic reason for her failure to understand Alceste. Even the loss of all her suitors does not seem to dismay her. Doubtless she trusts her own powers to win others. We cannot imagine her as deeply

affected by what has befallen her. Rather do we think of her resuming her life just as she has always lived it. She is not without the more serious faults of lying, and of using deceitful excuses and evasions. We find it impossible to forgive her for telling Alceste that she loves him for we know that she does not. This she does on two occasions, in verse 503 and verse 1392. All this time she has been encouraging her other suitors and even writing ugly things about Alceste to Clitandre. Thus she is a deceitful and dangerous flirt. She can tell a falsehood with every appearance of truth. She has no depth of character, since her strong will and self-control are essentially selfish. She also has a certain degree of pride which enables her to bear her ultimate defeat with equanimity.

Yet, strange to say, Célimène always retains our interest, and to a limited degree gains our sympathy. The present editor, during many years of interpreting *Le Misanthrope* to mixed classes, has noticed that young women are very apt to plead excuses for Célimène and even to ask sympathy for her. Young men, however, rarely do so. This attitude corresponds with that in the play itself, where all the men condemn her, and her sole defender is Eliante. To be sure Arsinoé also condemns, but the accusations are so manifestly inspired by spiteful jealousy that they do not ring true, and may be disregarded. It is quite surprising how many things may be said in palliation. To begin with one may quote Alceste's own charity, which persists to the very end. To be sure he is in love with her, and is therefore biased, but yet many passages show how thoroughly he understands her character. The very fact that so ugly a person as Arsinoé attacks Célimène predisposes us in her favor. We rejoice greatly when Célimène puts Arsinoé to rout. Similarly we are pleased at her strictures on Acaste, Clitandre, Oronte, and "le grand flandrin de Vicomte." Women are apt to declare that Célimène exercises merely a woman's right to encourage as many men as pay her attention and even to use diplomacy in holding Alceste in line. They point out, that, *if*

she is really not sure which one she desires, we should not blame her for postponing a decision. They say that Alceste is selfish in wishing her so entirely for himself, and in refusing her the life that has always been hers. They add that the proposition to take her completely away from society is unreasonable and that this insistence on Alceste's part is tyrannical; she shows wisdom in refusing to surrender. They call attention to the caddish conduct of Acaste and Clitandre in reading private letters in public, and especially in threatening to slander Célimène all over Paris. Nor do they excuse Alceste for his outburst over Célimène's letter to Oronte. In short such defenders of Célimène use almost her own words in their criticism of Alceste. They consider that Célimène is more sinned against than sinning, and that in reality she is more to be pitied than Alceste because her faults are the result of social conditions for which she is not to blame, and, above all, because she has no ideals to fall back upon, whereas Alceste emerges triumphant in his righteousness. Thus from many angles harshness of criticism may be tempered with indulgence. We have already called attention to Mlle Cécile Sorel's interpretation of the rôle of Célimène. Emphasizing her beauty, her grace, her wit, her gaiety, while at the same time representing her fondness for gossip merely as a sort of society game of the day, in which we readily grant her the first prize, Mlle Sorel succeeds in making us enjoy Célimène thoroughly. When she leaves the stage with pride undiminished, with no display of emotion, and in perfect self-control, we are made to feel as if Célimène had won a victory rather than suffered defeat.

Philinte

Philinte is said to have been modelled on Chapelle, a boyhood friend of Molière, who studied with him under Gassendi. In the play he is the chief foil to Alceste. He really has an even worse opinion of mankind than Alceste, but has ceased to be concerned about it. This fact might suggest that he had had

greater experience of life, and was consequently somewhat older than Alceste. The indignation of the latter seems to indicate that he has only recently discovered that man is so wicked, whereas the indifference of Philinte would tend to show his longer acquaintance with the evil of the world. Philinte never allows his contemptuous opinion of mankind to worry him. He is quite willing to let things go on as they have.

Philinte strives to bring Alceste to his own coolness and indifference. After the quarrel with Oronte, he accuses Alceste of having caused it by his absurd frankness, which only angers Alceste the more. In Act II, Scene v he again blames Alceste for his quarrelsome disposition, and again receives an angry reply (683–690). Striving once more, in Act IV, Scene ii, to soothe Alceste, he is twice told abruptly to mind his own business (1234, 1243–1244). In Act V Alceste has made up his mind to flee from mankind. Philinte tries to prevent his doing so. The very last lines of the play are Philinte's appeal to Eliante to join him in this effort. It seems, therefore, clear that Molière intended to show in Philinte not only a foil to Alceste, but an antidote as well, for it is very evident that Alceste would have been a far different man, and a far happier man, if he had yielded, in part at least, to his friend's counsel.

Philinte is polite and politic, Alceste rude and tactless. Philinte is quite ready to go with the crowd; Alceste refuses any such, to him, cowardly compromise. Philinte is always cool and self-possessed; Alceste is excitable. Philinte is a flatterer, Alceste never flatters. Philinte prefers to ignore the faults of people; Alceste boldly tells them their defects. As a result of their respective qualities and attitudes Philinte enjoys a comfortable, peaceful life; Alceste has one bitter disappointment after another. It is to be noticed that Eliante and Philinte are the only characters who escape all punishment at the end of the play. All others undergo some sorrow or defeat or discomfiture, Alceste the worst of all. Are we to think that, in thus rewarding Philinte with the happiness of winning Eliante,

Molière desires to approve his worldly wisdom and prudence? We cannot so believe, but rather that he merely wished to show how, in the world as it is, rewards are often denied to those who deserve them most. If all men were like Philinte, there would never be any progress. If some men were like Alceste, the world might be shamed to its own correction. Alceste has at least a positive ideal. Philinte has not. The best thing we can say of him is that he remains Alceste's best friend.

Arsinoé

From the standpoint of plot Arsinoé is a very essential character. Stung by Célimène's attack upon her, she seeks to alienate Alceste and to win him for herself. It is she who furnishes him with the letter from Célimène to Oronte. This letter brings on the strong scene between Alceste and Célimène in Act IV. In many respects Arsinoé is the most obnoxious female character in all Molière. She is venomous and underhanded, seeking revenge and personal advantage in a petty manner. She is the worst social hypocrite in the play, and if Célimène's words in verses 855, 925, 939–944 are to be believed, she is a religious hypocrite also. Outwardly her assumed austerity resembles the genuine sternness of Alceste. We trust, however, his sincerity, but suspect her from the beginning. We are glad that her blandishments fail to win Alceste for herself, and we readily understand why she has hitherto failed, and will always fail, to appeal to any self-respecting and far-sighted man. That she is approaching middle age is evident, not only from Célimène's cutting reference to her years, but also from her language which is that of a belated *précieuse* (See notes 901, 930, 1129–1130, 1680). Her prudery is offensively unctuous. This prudery with its exposure by Célimène affords one of the most humorous scenes of the play. Incidentally this scene is the best possible illustration that the frankness urged by Alceste can never bring good results, but merely cause bitterness and hatred.

Oronte

The key-note to Oronte's character is vanity, more particularly the vanity of authorship. Alceste's judgment of his poetry is exceeded by that of Célimène who declares in the letter to Clitandre that "sa prose me fatigue autant que ses vers." His conceit makes him boast of his success at court and the favor of the king. It is his vanity again that leads him to say at the end to Célimène:

> Je . . . trouve ma vengeance en ce que vous perdez [namely, himself!]
>
> (Verse 1706)

The ugliness of his nature is revealed in his support of the lie, started by Alceste's opponent in the lawsuit, that Alceste had written the "livre abominable" (1501). To do such a thing after the official reconciliation with Alceste reveals a contemptible character, not unlike that of Arsinoé. That there is some collusion between him and Arsinoé seems proved by her coming into possession of the letter written to him by Célimène, for we cannot understand otherwise how Arsinoé could have secured it.

Eliante

It is a pleasure to come to Eliante who is Molière's ideal woman at an age between the delightful Henriette of *Les Femmes Savantes* and the more mature Elmire of *Le Tartuffe*. Like both of these she is clever and equal to every emergency. She is an excellent foil to the other women of the play, Arsinoé and Célimène. Unlike the latter she is interested in but one man; unlike Arsinoé she has not a touch of envy or jealousy; unlike both she has no desire to injure anybody. Introduced as "la sincère Eliante" (215), she remains of that character throughout. She is quiet, gentle, wholesome, yet not without force and wisdom. Her kindliness and charity toward both Alceste and Célimène make her extremely attractive and lov-

able. In the portrait-scene of Act II she has no share in the spreading of scandalous gossip. Perhaps we might prefer to have her voice more objection to it than the mere aside to Philinte (583–584), but had she interfered, she would have been less unobtrusive. On her lips Molière has placed the delightful passage about the blindness of lovers who see beauties even in their sweethearts' defects (711–730). This passage always evokes applause. It would have lost much effect, had it been entrusted to any other character in that scene. Of similar wisdom is her refusal to marry Alceste when, to spite Célimène, he offers her his love, for, as she tells him, everyone knows that

Une coupable aimée est bientôt innocente.

(Verse 1265)

Some critics may judge her a little too cold and logical here and in Act IV, Scene ii, but it is precisely there that she most resembles the other ideal women in Molière who are well-balanced, possess sound common sense, and are never carried away by their emotions. The most remarkable feature of Eliante's rôle is its brevity. She has but seventeen speeches and a total of seventy-four verses, yet she stands out with a distinctness equal to any other character. By this paucity of lines did Molière perhaps wish to indicate that silence was a desirable feminine quality! Despite Eliante's taciturnity, however, she is quite ready of speech when the time comes. Thus at the end it is she who in a dainty, yet completely dignified, way asks Philinte to marry her. Far from being subject to criticism, this little touch is truly charming. Eliante is the only real relief in a picture otherwise sombre, painful and oppressive.

Acaste and Clitandre

Molière had already ridiculed the Petits Marquis in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, *Les Fâcheux* and *La Critique de L'Ecole des Femmes*. In the last two he puts real noblemen on the stage,

just as he does in *Le Misanthrope*. In *Les Précieuses Ridicules* Mascarille is a false marquis, but his resemblance to Acaste is extremely close. Like Mascarille, who boasts that he knows everything without ever having studied, Acaste claims ability

A juger sans étude et raisonner de tout
(Verse 792).

Clitandre is no less conceited, but he does not talk so much. Acaste's self-laudation is tremendous. He is a happy-go-lucky fellow, immensely pleased with himself, and without a single thought in his head except to dress well and be a success with the ladies. When he discovers in the letter to Clitandre that Célimène ridicules him as he deserves, his conceit is so hurt that he becomes willing to expose her duplicity. No true gentleman would have done this. Hence it is Acaste who leads the fierce attack upon Célimène in the letter-reading scene of the last act. We are especially pleased that Célimène told the truth about him.

Both Clitandre and Acaste are consummate flatterers, but Acaste is more noisy about it. He is also more silly in his stage-business. The cue-word to describe Clitandre is that used by Célimène about him, namely "doucereux," indicative of soft and gushing sentimentality. Acaste has such a conceited idea of his power to entrance the ladies that he expects them to gush over him. The rivalry between Acaste and Clitandre for Célimène's favor leads to their wager which in turn brings on the dénouement of the play. Their silly and shallow flirtatious love-making serves admirably to enhance the dignity and depth of Alceste's passion.

Du Bois. Basque

Du Bois is another illustration of the author's skill in depicting in very few strokes a complete character. Du Bois has but twenty-five verses, yet he stands out very vividly as a perfect specimen of the stupid but faithful servant.

Basque has but seven verses, but even in these he succeeds in showing us his peasant origin by the use of the incorrect "du dor" (747). In common with other servants in earlier French comedy, Basque takes his name from a region.

PERFORMANCES AND ACTORS

Le Misanthrope was somewhat of a puzzle to early critics who witnessed its first performances, for it was too deep a play for ready comprehension. On this account the enemies of the author were quick to attack him, declaring that the play transgressed all traditions of the theatre, since it did not offer irresistible comedy, nor could it be considered a tragedy. Hence, said they, it was an unfortunate and useless attempt of an author who had been successful hitherto, as long as he kept to the usual conceptions of his art. Some of this criticism is valid, for, as we have seen, *Le Misanthrope* is an unusual play. It is the most deft combination of high comedy and an approach to tragedy that Molière wrote. The public had become accustomed, and in part through Molière himself, to plays of more complicated plot and less refined comedy. More cultivated minds, however, and among them Boileau, were quick to see the superiority of the new departure and to declare that Molière had never written anything so excellent. The rhyming gazetteers of the day reflect this favorable opinion. Thus Robinet, speaking of the second performace of Sunday, June 6, 1666, wrote:

> *Le Misanthrope* enfin se joue;
> Je le vis dimanche et j'avoue
> Que *de Molière*, son auteur,
> N'a rien fait de cette valeur.

Similarly, in *La Muse dauphine* of Thursday, June 17, Subligny declared:

> Après son *Misanthrope* il ne faut plus rien voir; c'est un chef'-d'œuvre inimitable.

Such was the verdict of the men of rank and taste, who in those days chiefly determined the success of a play.

The first run, twenty-one performances, was from June 4 to August 1, 1666. For the first eleven of these the program, according to Despois-Mesnard, included another shorter play, but *Le Médecin malgré lui* did not appear with *Le Misanthrope* until September 3. Thus it did not, as some have claimed, save the play from financial failure. There were thirty-four performances in 1666, and, from 1667 to the death of Molière, February 17, 1673, there were twenty-seven more. His last appearance as Alceste was November 8, 1672. From the death of the author to that of Louis XIV in 1715 the play was given on an average seven times a year, with nineteen court performances. These figures show conclusively that it was not a popular play. Its early record from the standpoint of ticket-sales is not brilliant, and the same has been true ever since. *L' Avare*, *Les Femmes Savantes*, *Le Tartuffe*, and *Le Malade Imaginaire* have ever been more popular. This does not mean, however, that *Le Misanthrope* has not increasingly held its own, especially when its chief rôles have been played by eminent artists.

All the evidence that we have indicates that Molière played the part of Alceste brilliantly and established certain traditions that have been observed by those who followed. Keeping an elegance of bearing and of tone that befitted a man of Alceste's social rank, Molière, nevertheless, combined the caustic frankness and satirical bitterness of his character with a due amount of the ridiculous. It was not an easy combination to make, and only an actor of Molière's great genius could succeed in maintaining it. We must never forget how great an actor he was, in the judgment of all his contemporaries. Seven days after Molière's death the rôle of Alceste was played by his favorite pupil and protégé, Michel Baron, who was then not quite twenty. In March of that same year Baron joined the troupe of the *Hôtel de Bourgogne*, but, when this troupe joined forces

with the remnants of Molière's troupe in 1680, he resumed the part of Alceste. Except of course for the period of his withdrawal from the stage, 1691 to 1720, he continued in this rôle until his death in 1729, playing it until he was over seventy years old, and always with great skill. Collé declared he played "divinement." We have given at notes 180–181, 405–412, 424, various indications of his excellent interpretation. Without doubt this was very similar to that of Molière. Among other celebrated actors who have distinguished themselves as Alceste may be mentioned Dancourt (himself an author of high merit), the brothers Quinault, Grandval, Perrier, and Molé. In more recent times Delaunay, Worms, Silvain, Jacques Copeau, Raphael Duflos have held high the traditions of this great rôle.

The part of Célimène as created by Molière's wife in a manner which he praised highly did not receive as great approval as that of Alceste. Yet we know that she was an excellent actress. Contemporaries speak chiefly of the richness and elegance of her costume. She continued to hold the part after Molière's death and her marriage with Guérin. Her most noteworthy successors were Mademoiselle Gaussin, Madame Préville, Mademoiselle Contat, and, above all, Mademoiselle Mars. The last was perhaps the best Célimène that ever trod the boards. She introduced in a subtle way the suggestion that Célimène really loved Alceste but was too proud to acknowledge it. Whether this was Molière's intention, may well remain a question. So excellent was Mademoiselle Mars that a marble statue of her in her costume of Célimène was made by P. J. Thomas. It may be seen in the museum of the *Comédie Française*. Another variation from the probable original purpose of the author was introduced in more recent times by Mademoiselle Cécile Sorel. Of this effort to make Célimène a more sympathetic character we have already spoken.

We shall mention only two of the gala performances of *Le Misanthrope* which stand out in history. On June 10, 1837 it was played at Versailles as a part of the inauguration festivi-

ties of the Historical Museum in the palace which Louis-Philippe had just restored. The audience was a most distinguished one and included the king, who had given to the actors most elaborate costumes and stage equipment. Despite the fact that Mademoiselle Mars played Célimène, critics declare that the performance as a whole was not a great success. It seemed smothered by the elaborate ceremonies of which it was but a part. A far more artistic revival took place January 14, 1878 at the *Comédie Française*, the Maison de Molière, in celebration of the 256th anniversary of the birth of the great dramatist. On this occasion Delaunay played Alceste, and Mademoiselle Croizette, Célimène. The elder Coquelin played Oronte and the younger, Du Bois. The same cast presented the play on June 2 and 14, 1879 in London to most enthusiastic audiences. Says *Le Moliériste* of July 1879: "Rarement les effets comiques du rôle d'Alceste ont autant porté. . . ."

For the first time on any English-speaking stage the great American actor Richard Mansfield created the part of Alceste at the New Amsterdam Theatre, New York, April 10, 1905. Mansfield reverted to the traditional way of playing the part in a lighter vein which had been the way of Molière. The play was splendidly staged and costumed, and evoked great applause. An interesting account may be found in *The Literary Digest* of April 22, 1905.

In 1922 a French company headed by Mademoiselle Cécile Sorel of the *Comédie Française* gave brilliant performances of *Le Misanthrope* in New York.

SEQUELS AND IMITATIONS

In creating a misanthrope Molière conformed in part to the definition of Plato: "Misanthropy is not natural. It has its origin in the fact that one has been deceived several times by those whom one believed to be one's best friends. One ends by holding all men in hatred." The classic example of antiquity

was Timon of Athens. Plutarch gave many details of his life, and Lucian made him the chief interlocutor in one of his famous Dialogues. Shakespeare's tragedy *Timon of Athens* was inspired mostly from Lucian. While the primitive idea of a misanthrope retiring from the world may have come to Molière from the ancients, yet his Alceste is so individual a creation that we are justified in saying that he owes practically nothing to any predecessor. The absurd charge that Molière adapted his material from an Italian comedy of the same name which had been played at Naples and about which he had been informed three weeks before by sieur Angelo of the Italian troupe, has been rejected by all critics of any reputation.

While, therefore, *Le Misanthrope* had no ancestry, few plays have had more so-called descendants. This was due chiefly to two causes, first that later writers, dissatisfied with Molière's picture of Alceste and Philinte, tried to improve upon the originals, and secondly that the end of the play left the subsequent fate of its main characters a matter of interesting speculation. In one or two instances also there have been crude attempts at imitation. The best known is *The Plain Dealer* of William Wycherly, 1677. Wycherly had been in France in his early youth and had associated with the *précieuse* society of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, but there is no evidence of such refining influence in his coarse play. The main character, Manly, is a vulgar and brutal caricature of the elegant and sensitive Alceste. The English Célimène is a venal and impudent courtesan. In similar way Wycherly disfigured everything else that he borrowed from Molière. Yet Voltaire thought the plot more interesting than that of *Le Misanthrope* and used a part of it in *La Prude* which he wrote in 1747 for the court of the Duchesse du Maine at Sceaux where it was performed.

Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, 1777, is inspired, in the feature that gives the title, from the scene of the portraits in Act II of *Le Misanthrope*, with reminiscences of *Le Tartuffe* and Fielding's *Tom Jones*. However, the drawing-room of Lady Sneerwell

is far less refined than that of Célimène, and the scandal-mongering that goes on there is fiercer, more vulgar, and is distributed among all the characters. In *Le Misanthrope* Célimène is the only one. Congreve's *The Double Dealer* 1693 is only remotely reminiscent of *Le Misanthrope*. Returning to the continent we need not be misled by *Der Menschenfeind*, an unfinished play of Schiller, for on investigation we find that the title is about the sole resemblance to Molière's play. In Palissot's *Les Courtisanes, ou l'Ecole des Mœurs* 1775 (three acts, verse) there is a scene of scandal-mongering, but it is not equal in wit to that of Sheridan.

We have already referred to Jean Jacques Rousseau's dissatisfaction with the characters of Alceste and Philinte. Following Fénelon's criticism in his *Lettre à l'Académie*, 1714, Rousseau declared, 1758, in the *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles* that Molière made virtue ridiculous by making us laugh at the virtuous Alceste, while Philinte's philosophy of life is applauded and rewarded. Among other things Rousseau said: "Ce Philinte est le sage de la pièce, un de ces honnêtes gens du grand monde, dont les maximes ressemblent beaucoup à celles des fripons." There ensued quite a controversy in which d'Alembert, who replied to Rousseau, found support in La Harpe, Marmontel, and even in Lessing. Fabre d'Eglantine in 1790 followed up the ideas of Rousseau by writing *Le Philinte de Molière, ou la Suite du Misanthrope*, a play in five acts and in verse. Though not devoid of interest, this play is badly written. Alceste has become here a paragon of virtue, while Philinte is not far removed from a villain. Hence Philinte is no longer like the one in Molière, and the play might more justly be called *Le Philinte de Rousseau*. Instead of being a real sequel postulated upon Molière, the play is little else than a poor attempt to dramatize in a sentimental manner Rousseau's erroneous conceptions of *Le Misanthrope*.

Already in 1765 Marmontel had written a story entitled *Le Misanthrope corrigé*, in which we follow Alceste into his self-

imposed exile and witness what befalls him. Here we have two Philinte-like characters, one of whom is a woman. Alceste is cured of his misanthropy by falling in love with her. It is all rather insipid and quite in the mawkish, sentimental manner of this period of the eighteenth century. Marmontel's tale was dramatized by Demoustier in 1790 under the title *Alceste à la campagne, ou le Misanthrope corrigé* (three acts in verse). This follows Marmontel very closely only to prove how far we have strayed from the true picture of life as depicted by Molière.

Another "sequel" to *Le Misanthrope* in one act and in verse was written by Georges Courteline 1905 under the title *La Conversion d'Alceste.* It was played January 15, 1905 at the *Comédie Française.* Here Alceste is represented as having married Célimène who then betrays him with Philinte. Surely this is an abominable solution of the problem left unsettled by Molière. In its stark realism it is as far removed from Molière as is the sentimentalism of Marmontel. One would prefer to this sombre picture *Le Misanthrope et l'Auvergnat* of Eugène Labiche, which was first played August 10, 1852. This gay comedy, "mêlée de couplets," bears no relation to Molière's play as far as the names of the characters are concerned, but nevertheless it is a clever analysis of the same idea of truth-telling as in *Le Misanthrope.* Chiffonnet, a misanthrope, had lost a purse containing 4,000 francs. It is returned to him by the finder Machavoine, a poor Auvergnat peasant, who refuses a reward. Charmed at this evidence of honesty Chiffonnet employs Machavoine to tell him "la vérité, toute la vérité, rien que la vérité." Things go well for a time while Machavoine exposes the dishonesty of others including Chiffonnet's cook, but when his truth-telling reveals Chiffonnet's own little deceptions, the latter is less pleased. He then employs his cook to tempt Machavoine into falsehoods and deceptions. The plan works perfectly. Machavoine falls in love with the cook under whose influence he becomes as great a liar as anyone.

The words of the Despois-Mesnard edition (*Œuvres de Molière* Volume V, page 424) are a most fitting conclusion to the above paragraphs:

> En résumé, les suites méritent encore moins d'être rattachées au souvenir de notre chef-d'œuvre que quelques-unes des imitations, et cette grande comédie reste sans postérité, de même qu'elle était née sans mère, — *proles sine matre creata.*

VERSIFICATION

In the important matters of syntax and versification Molière in the *Misanthrope* permitted himself as large a freedom as was consistent with his purpose of securing an effective style. Prior to Malherbe there had been no authoritative treatise on versification. After Malherbe the principles that he enunciated were slow in winning complete recognition. Molière was one of those who were only partially obedient to these principles. He preferred the freer rules of the poetics of Port Royal. In similar manner the syntax of Molière retained much of the easy freedom of earlier days. The net result was a greater flexibility of style. The language of comedy had always been more independent of regulation than that of tragedy, and Molière was never willing to sacrifice his thought to academic restriction. Thus he constantly uses early seventeenth and even late sixteenth century expressions and idioms.

Criticisms of Molière's style are chiefly due to this habit of independence on his part. As a man of the stage his chief concern was to convey from actor to auditor a message that should be understood clearly and immediately. In this respect he succeeded admirably. So true is this that, even if the auditor does not hear every word, he always hears the important word or phrase upon which depends the understanding of any passage. If this important word or phrase cannot readily be made to fall at the end of the verse or cæsura, Molière does not hesitate to place it elsewhere. Hence he uses frequently "enjambe-

ment," the carrying over into the following verse of the full expression of the thought. An example of "enjambement" is the following:

> Par la sangbleu! Messieurs, je ne croyais pas être
> Si plaisant que je suis.
>
> (Verses 773–774)

The following is a partial list of enjambements in *Le Misanthrope:* Verses 241–242; 255–256; 259–260; 267–268; 269–270; 275–276; 309–310; 312–313; 345–346; 523–524; 591–592; 745–746–747; 761–762; 763–764; 767–768; 769–770; 773–774–775; 849–850.

The effect of this free use of enjambement is often excellent especially when the emphatic word is thus brought into a more prominent position as in the case at 523–524:

> Mon amour ne se peut concevoir, et *jamais*
> *Personne n'a aimé,* madame, comme je fais.

It is noticeable that Molière uses enjambement less often with the passing years, and also that they are more frequent in dialogue that is broken up into short speeches than in longer passages.

The Alexandrine verse required the cæsura after the sixth syllable. In tragedy this rule made for greater dignity and solidity, but in comedy a strict adherence to the rule would have prevented many striking effects, especially in animated and broken dialogue. Therefore Molière again uses greater independence, although in general he does conform to the rule. Maurice Souriau declares:

> Molière a le plus souvent *trouvé* la césure au sixième pied, mais il ne paraît pas souvent l'avoir *cherchée.* Son vers sur ce point est aussi libre que celui d'un romantique de la bonne époque.

Here again Molière shows greater adherence to the general rule as he grows older. His first eleven plays swarm with verses

which would often be devoid of sense if divided exactly in the middle. And even in *Le Misanthrope* there are such cases; for example:

> . . . et dans tout il en use, ma foi,
> Le plus honnêtement du monde avecque moi.
>
> (Verses 291–292)

Here the cæsura must fall after *monde*, the eighth syllable. Or again:

> Et de vous mettre un peu plus en peine des vôtres (950).

where the sense cannot permit a pause until after *plus* the seventh syllable. In 1245 the pause cannot occur until after the ninth syllable. In *Le Misanthrope* there are many cases where two, three, or even four pauses are necessary, if the verse is to be spoken effectively. This is true, not only in broken dialogue where the rapidity of reply would necessarily split the verse in various ways, but also in places where there are no replies. Thus we have a 4–4–4 division in:

Pour de l'esprit — j'en ai sans doute — et du bon goût (791)
Et tout le mal — n'est pas si grand — que vous le faites (1526)
On le retrouve — encor plus plein — d'extravagance (574)
Et vous pouvez — conclure affaire — avec madame (1708)

Such verses are known as "ternary."

A 2–7–3 division is seen in:

> Pour moi, — je n'en fais point de façons, — et je croi (1191);

a 3–6–3 division in:

> Mon amour — ne se peut concevoir — et jamais (523);

a 3–3–6 division in:

Mais un cœur — à leurs vœux — moins facile et moins tendre (466)
Je suis sotte — et veux mal — à ma simplicité (1411);

a 3–5–4 division in:

Elle veut — que ce soit un vol — que je lui fais (868);

a 4–3–5 division in:

Et de vous mettre — un peu plus — en peine des vôtres (950);

and even a 4–5–3 division in:

Je ne sais point — jouer les hommes — en parlant (1088).

A peculiar case is

Morbleu! — c'est une chose — indigne, — lâche, — infâme (25)

where the emphasis requires a special stress on the three adjectives. If, however, we give this emphasis, we not only have a 2–4–3–2–2 division, but we have thirteen syllables instead of twelve, since the comma after *lâche* prevents elision of its mute *e* on *infâme*. The only alternative is to ignore this *e* thus getting a division 2–4–3–1–2. This case is an excellent illustration of Molière's independence. He never lets anything interfere with the forceful expression of thought. This is the real explanation of his free treatment of the cæsura. Thus in verse 314 emphasis requires stressing the syllables that we italicize below:

Voy*ons*, — mons*ieur;* — le *temps* — ne fait *rien* — à l'af*faire*

and we have a 2–2–2–3–3 division of the verse. Where then is its cæsura? It is noteworthy that such cases occur usually in Alceste's verses and that they express very forcefully his excitable nature. His emphatic use of *non*, *morbleu* and similar abrupt words tends to throw emphasis in unexpected and unusual places, thus disturbing the regular position of the cæsura.

See note 44–46 for an interesting case of rhyming-words in the cæsura.

In matters of rhyme Molière made full use of every freedom that he could. In his day, for instance, the tendency was to lengthen all *a* sounds. As a result the distinction between short and long *a* practically ceased to exist. This is the explanation of the great number of rhymes like *grâce: face* (33). Such cases

occur in the couplets whose first verse is numbered 33, 85, 153, 233, 435, 457, 561, 733, 785, 865, 981, 985, 1109, 1189, 1213, 1289, 1377, 1545, 1553. Such rhymes would scarcely be permitted today.

In similar manner long *ai*, *e* merged with short *ai*, *e*. Such cases occur at 113, 249, 513, 523, 597, 709, 771, 815, 867, 911, 959, 1047, 1181, 1348, 1757.

The *Art Poétique* of Port Royal permitted such rhymes, probably in view of the fact that the pronunciation in some cases was undecided and authorities therefore differed.

Vaugelas, the leading grammarian of the seventeenth century, said that there was a tendency to slur the final consonants, especially *s*. He called it "eating" the consonant. As a result of this carelessness, a number of rhymes existed that are no longer possible, and even in the seventeenth century there was difference of opinion about their use. In *net: fait* (63–64) and *net: satisfait* (447–448) the *t* of *net* was regularly pronounced, and Maurice Souriau declares we must sound all these *t's* and say *nette: fette* (see, however, note 63–64). Inversely Souriau says, however, that we must not sound the *s* of *Damis* in the rhyme *Damis: amis* (631–632), nor the *t* of *fat* in *combat: fat* (47–48), nor the *s* of *tous* when in the rhyme (see 535, 560, 859, 932, 1423. See also note 47–48).

In older editions of *Le Misanthrope* we find (verses 10, 161, 238, 282, 774, 1278, 1704, 1791) the forms *paroître*, *connoître* rhyming with *être* or *naître*. These were merely orthographically archaic, since this *oi* was pronounced *oué* at that time. In modern editions these forms have become *paraître*, *connaître*, and no further difficulty exists. Real archaic rhymes exist in *veuve: treuve* and *joie: monnoie;* for an historical explanation of these see notes 37–38, 225–226.

There are a few cases of rhyme which closely resemble assonance in their effect. Thus the six verses 743–748 with the rhymes *parler: reculer; pressées: plissées; c'est: plaît;* the four verses 574–576 with the rhymes *absence: extravagance; extrava-*

gants: fatigants; the four verses 1117–1120 with *passée: pensée; désabusé: aisé;* and the four verses 1095–1098 with *cruels: tels; telle: cervelle* sound not unlike a short *laisse* of a *chanson de geste.* There is real assonance in the old song that Alceste recites 393–400; 405–412. Semi-assonantal in character are *contredise: réduise* (669–670); *perfections: noms* (715–716); *dire: instruire* (749–750); *instruire: lire* (1689–1690); *suivre: vivre* (1763–1764).

In the matter of "eye-rhymes" Molière is not greatly concerned. In using the forms *croi, voi, reçoi* in 264, 455, 803, 1191, 1733 to rhyme with *soi, foi, moi,* he was completely within his rights, since these were the older verb-forms and still current. There seems to be only one case where he may have gone out of his way to satisfy the eye. In 1077–1078 he perhaps changed the normal expression *faire (la) mine* to *faire les mines* so that this might look better with *machines.* Similarly he put an *s* on the plural of *ha* so that it would look better with *fracas* (795–796). On the contrary he made no effort to please the eye in dozens of other places, rhyming *temps: gens* (59–60; 359–360; *poids: voix* (1399–1400); *nœud: peu* (295–296); *style: facile* (309–310); *méchants: gens* (429–430); *efforts: dehors* (463–464); *temps: ans* (983–984); *suffisance: encense* (431–432); *marquis: prix* (1697–1698); *contents: ans* (1773–1774); *compte: honte* (13–14) etc., etc. Such rhymes were condemned by Malherbe, but admitted by the Port Royal *Art Poétique,* and, as in every other instance, Molière chose the greater freedom.

He displayed a similar independence in the matter of considering *ie* monosyllabic or dissyllabic. In general *ie* (*iai*) is monosyllabic; thus in *auriez* (499); *voyiez* (500); *feriez* (948); *biais* (1351); *hier* (885), yet in *devriez* (14); *société* (442) the *ie* counts as two syllables. *Io* as verb-ending seems always monosyllabic; *continuions* (970); *prenions* (971). In 1278 *Ouais* is monosyllabic.

As regards mute *e* there is similar indecision. In *paye* (940) the *e* must count; but in *supplierai* (30), *remuerai* (193) and

avouerai (695) the *e* must be ignored in scanning, or we have a syllable too many. There are two peculiar cases of the mute *e* of the pronoun *le* which must be elided to preserve the verse-length:

Mais mon petit monsieur, prenez-*le un* peu moins haut (433).
Ou bien faites-*le en*trer. Qu'est-ce donc qu'il vous plaît (748).

Rhymes of the same word in different meanings, now avoided as much as possible, are not uncommon: *point*, the negative with *point* the noun (87–88, 939–940, 1139–1140); *pas* the negative with *pas* the noun (191–192, 445–446.) There is also a generous use of the rhymes derived from the same rootage: *faire: affaire* (313–314, 553–554, 753–754); *pourvue: vue* (697–698); *maudit: contredit* (135–136); *défaites: faites* (1009–1010); *s'assemble: ensemble* (449–450); *désormais: jamais* (1615–1616). To these can be added innumerable rhymes of the same verb-endings: *–ais–je* (361–362); *–iez* (425–426); *–erez* (564–565); *–ants* (119–120). There is one case of *–ions* verb-ending with *–ions* noun-ending (283–284), but here usually only such nouns are in rhyme (43–44, 115–116, 155–156, 367–368, 607–608 etc). It would not be peculiar to Molière to note the frequency of suffixes in rhyme: *–able; –ment; –ance; –eux; –euse; –ude; –age*, etc., etc.

Molière is not afraid of hiatus. One such case, *et . . . ah* (873), may be excused because with *ah*, Célimène suddenly switches her address to Arsinoé who has just entered.

Nearly all poets, even the best, are forced occasionally to complete the verse with words or phrases that add nothing of importance to the meaning. These words or phrases are called *chevilles*. For a poet who was forced to compose so rapidly as Molière, he is remarkably free from this necessity. Thus it has been calculated that in the first act of *Le Misanthrope* there are not more than seven *words* that are of the character of "fillers." There are a few *phrases* in the play which might be spared, as for instance:

Je m'étonne, *pour moi*, qu'étant, *comme il le semble*,
Vous et le genre humain si fort brouillés ensemble.

(Verses 209–210)

Yet we must remember that in the rapid recitation of the lines such phrases do not impress one as they would when read privately, and in some instances, far from being useless, these phrases often add a touch of strength or individuality. Of this sort are the following:

Et n'allez point quitter, *de quoi que l'on vous somme*,
Le nom que dans la cour vous avez d'honnête homme.

(Verses 209–210)

Et qu'après cet éclat, *qu'un noble cœur abhorre*,
Il peut m'être permis de vous aimer encore.

(Verses 1767–1768)

Enfin, *quoi qu'il en soit et sur quoi qu'on se fonde*,
Vous trouvez des raisons pour souffrir tout le monde.

(Verses 549–550)

The words of Maurice Souriau seem a fitting conclusion to this examination of the versification of *Le Misanthrope:*

Molière, obéissant à la fois à son instinct d'homme de théâtre et à son oreille de poète, n'appauvrit jamais sa pensée pour enrichir la rime; il prend les plus entières libertés avec des règles qui ne sont encore que les habitudes de Malherbe, c'est à dire qui n'ont pas encore été sanctionées par un *Art Poëtique* qui fasse autorité. . . . La véritable poésie, celle des idées, et non celle des mots, a-t-elle beaucoup gagné à la pratique quelquefois trop savante de nos ciseleurs modernes?

SYNTAX

As with versification Molière felt free to use such peculiarities in the structure of the language as he had inherited from the writers of the early seventeenth and even of the late sixteenth

century. These peculiarities, as they occur in *Le Misanthrope*, may be grouped under the following main headings:

1. *Omission of the definite article where now we expect it:*

99, *sous* [les] *mêmes soins;* 889, *souffrez* [la] *visite;* 1099, *ce chapitre de* [la] *cour;* 1187, *dire* [la] *vérité;* 1532, *il a* [la] *permission;* 1548, *j'aurai* [le] *droit;* 1605 [le] *même soin;* 1648, *dis* [la] *même chose;* 1753, *dire* [le] *vrai* (= la vérité).

2. *Omission of the indefinite article which is now required:*

124, *j'ai* [un] *procès;* 200, *faire* [une] *injustice;* 744, *pour* [une] *affaire;* 842, *avoir* [une] *meilleure part;* 946, *c'était* [une] *médisance;* 1372, [un] *cœur;* 1395, *d'*[un] *autre côté;* 1452, *pis que* [qu'un] *démon;* 1532, *d'être* [un] *franc scélerat;* 1605, [une] *pareille ardeur.*

3. *Omission of the partitive where now expected:*

90, *qu'*[que des] *objets;* 174, *comme* [des] *vices; ne sont-ce plus* [des] *défauts;* 283, *avoir* [de] *telles complexions;* 866, *elle a* [de la] *tendresse;* 1038, *sans me faire* [du] *tort;* 1411, *veux* [du] *mal.*

4. *Insertion of definite or indefinite article not now required:*

27, *par un malheur;* 610, *prenez l'assistance* (cf. note 610); 614, *traîner en une longueur;* 1097, *madame une telle* (Cf. *messieurs tels*, 1096); 1268, *courroux d'un amant;* 1704, *vous me faites un bien* (for *du bien*).

5. *A freer use of present participles, whose subjects are not the same as those of the main clause. Such use is known as* anacoluthia. *Today we avoid such use and make a new clause introduced by* quand, lorsque, dès que, au moment où, après que, si, pendant que, *etc.* (See note 23.)

23, *en vous séparant* = au moment où vous vous séparez;
160, *prenant un autre cours* = si elles prenaient un autre cours;
302, *en m'exposant à vous* = quand je m'expose a vous;

505, *ayant pris* = après que j'ai pris;
918, *en m'apprenant* = quand vous m'apprenez;
1042, *attendant un moment* = pendant que j'attends un moment;
1093, *perdant ces avantages* = si l'on perd ces avantages;
1157, *croyant* where the reference is to an *il* to be implied as the subject of *dire*.
1303, *rejetant mes vœux* = si vous aviez rejeté mes vœux;
1427, *en naissant* = quand vous fûtes née *or* à votre naissance;
1581, *attendant sa venue* = pendant que nous attendons sa venue.

6. *A similar anacoluthic use with an infinitive:*

302, *pour me parler* = pour que vous me parliez;
1157, *c'est de dire* = c'est qu'il a dit.
1331, *pour n'avoir pas de seing* = parce qu'il n'a pas de seing;
1359, *sans s'emporter* = sans que nous nous emportions.

7. *Free use of an absolute participle:*

473, *votre complaisance . . . moins étendue* = votre complaisance si elle était moins étendue.
1279, *ces soupirs poussés* = ces soupirs que vous poussez.
1311, *percé du coup mortel* where *percé* agrees with a *je* to be supplied from the context (see note 1311).
1325, *ce billet découvert* = ce billet que j'ai découvert.
1680, *l'amitié passant sur de petits discords* = laissant passer l'amitié sur de petits discords.

8. *A larger use of the present active infinitive for a passive infinitive, a present participle, or a clause:*

85–86, *. . . qu'il ne lasse à conter* = qu'il ne lasse en contant *or* lorsqu'il conte.
358, *pour ne point écrire* = pour qu'il n'écrive point.
451, *de parler autrement* = si je parlais autrement.
702, *A ne rien pardonner le pur amour éclate* = en ne pardonnant rien *or* quand on ne pardonne rien.

1690, *ceci vaut assez la peine de le lire* = ceci vaut la peine d'être lu *or* qu'on le lise.

1797, *sans trop m'inquiéter* = sans que je m'inquiète trop.

9. *A preference for plurals of nouns where today singulars are more frequent:*

6, *chagrins;* 18, *tendresses;* 39, *empressements;* 59, *vices;* 121, *haines;* 142, *mesures;* 347, *empressements;* 348, *amusements;* 907, *ombres;* 1077, *mines;* 1101, *pensées;* 1102, *ardeurs;* 1281, *horreurs;* 1282, *déloyautés;* 1307, *châtiments;* 1308, *ressentiments;* 1554, *horreurs,* etc. Some of the above are in the rhyme in couplets and could just as well have been rhymed as singulars. Yet abstract singulars are also plentiful; for instance:

> *Je ne trouve partout que lâche flatterie,*
> *Qu'injustice, intérêt, trahison, fourberie.*
>
> (Verses 93–94)

10. *Ellipses are quite common:*

486, *en* [se] *faisant votre esclave*

911; 959, *Et pour l'attribuer* [à autre chose] *qu'aux mouvements secrets.*

11. *Other prepositions used than those current today in the same constructions. See the Notes and the Vocabulary for instances.*

12. *Minor syntactical peculiarities are:*

a. The agreement of the adverbial *tout;* see note 390.

b. Greater freedom in the position of adjectives; see notes 154, 174.

c. The position of object pronouns *before* auxiliary verbs; see note 16.

d. The omission of *il* in such expressions as *d'où vient?* See notes 221, 239.

e. *pour* introducing a causal clause; see note 120–121.

f. The occasional omission of *que* in the *c'est . . . que* construction; see notes 26, 58, 158.

g. Differing use of relative and interrogative pronouns; see notes 21, 828.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE DIALOGUE

(In round numbers of verses)

Character	Act I	Act II	Act III	Act IV	Act V	Total
Alceste	242	129	43	165	161	740
Célimène		128	113	55	45	341
Philinte	125	16		60	31	232
Arsinoé			125		27	152
Oronte	79				37	116
Acaste		10	51		13*	74*
Eliante		24		43	7	74
Clitandre		15	22		7*	44*
Du Bois				25		25
Basque		5	2			7
Le garde		3				3
Totals	446	330	356	348	328	1,808*

*Acaste has also 37 lines of letter; Clitandre 9.

The Principal Characters are on-stage as follows:—

	Act I	Act II	Act III	Act IV	Act V	Total
	Scenes	*Scenes* i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii	*Scenes* iv (*briefly*)	*Scenes* iii, iv	*Scenes* ii, iii, iv	
Alceste with Célimène						13
Alceste without Célimène	i, ii, iii		v	ii	i	6
Célimène without Alceste			ii, iii			2
Philinte	i, ii, iii	v, vi, vii		i, ii	i, iii, v	11
Arsinoé			iv, v		iv	3
Oronte	ii				ii, iii, iv	4
Eliante		v, vi, vii		i, ii	iii, iv	7
Acaste and Clitandre		v, vi, vii	i, ii, iii,		iv	7
Totals	3	7	5	4	4	23

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B

In the preparation of the notes the following editions of *Le Misanthrope* have been freely consulted:—

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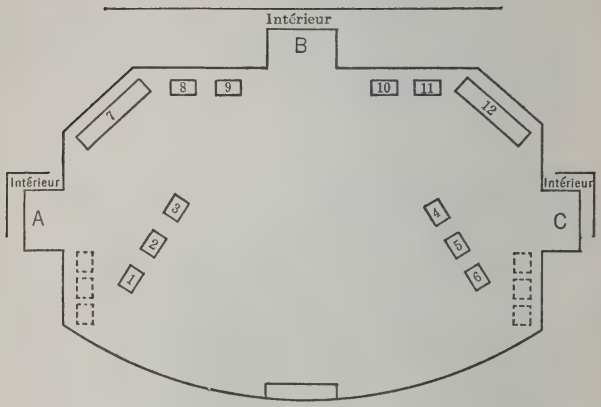

(Mise en scène de la *Comédie-Française.*)

LÉGENDE

1, 3, 5, 8, 11. — Fauteuils.
2, 4, 6, 9, 10. — Chaises.
7, 12. — Canapés.
(Meubles Louis XIII en velours rouge, bois doré. Tapis.)

A. — Porte d'appartement.
B. — Porte à deux battants.
C. — Porte allant au dehors.

Au cinquième acte, les meubles 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 sont reportés aux places pointillées.

Quatre plans de profondeur.

LE MISANTHROPE

COMEDIE EN CINQ ACTES

Jouée pour la première fois sur le Théâtre du Palais Royal le Vendredi 4 juin 1666.

PERSONNAGES

PERSONNAGES	ACTEURS [1]
Alceste, amant de Célimène	Molière
Philinte, ami d'Alceste	La Thorillière
Oronte, amant de Célimène	Du Croisy
Célimène, amante d'Alceste [2]	Mlle Molière [3]
Eliante, cousine de Célimène	Mlle De Brie [4]
Arsinoé, amie de Célimène	Mlle Du Parc [4]
Acaste, marquis	La Grange
Clitandre, marquis	Hubert [?]
Basque, valet de Célimène	[?]
Un Garde de la maréchaussée de France	De Brie
Du Bois, valet d'Alceste	Béjart

La scène est à Paris, dans la maison de Célimène.

[1] This distribution of rôles for the first performances is not based upon any single authentic document, since, unfortunately, none has ever been discovered. Therefore, scholars have been forced to piece together scattered information, to obtain what is, in all probability, the correct cast. There is no doubt, however, about the leading rôles.

[2] In the edition of 1734 the phrase «amante d'Alceste» is omitted.

[3] This was the stage-name of Molière's wife.

[4] There is considerable doubt how these two rôles were assigned to the two actresses mentioned although the best evidence is in favor of the above arrangement. Du Parc, the husband of "Mlle" Du Parc, had joined the rival troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne some time ago. This fact undoubtedly made it easier for Racine to entice her away also. In any event he succeeded, and this famous actress, the best in Molière's company, created in November, 1667, the title rôle in Racine's *Andromaque*. It is evident, therefore, that Mlle Du Parc remained only a short time with Molière's company after the earlier performances of *Le Misanthrope*. Just when she left is not known. Racine's intriguing to get Mlle Du Parc to leave Molière was one of the reasons for the growing alienation between the two great dramatists. See Volume II, pages 213–215, of P. D. Lemazurier *Galerie historique des acteurs du théâtre français depuis 1660* (Paris 1810).

ACTE PREMIER

(*Au lever du rideau, la scène est vide; la porte A*[1] *s'ouvre. Alceste entre vivement, suivi de Philinte. Tous deux passent derrière les sièges 1, 2, 3.*[1] *Alceste vient auprès du siège 4, Philinte au milieu.*)

SCENE PREMIERE

PHILINTE, ALCESTE

PHILINTE

Qu'est-ce donc? qu'avez-vous?

ALCESTE

Laissez-moi, je vous prie.

PHILINTE

Mais encor, dites-moi, quelle bizarrerie. . . .

ALCESTE (*s'assied*)

Laissez-moi là, vous dis-je, et courez vous cacher.

PHILINTE

Mais on entend les gens au moins, sans se fâcher.

ALCESTE

Moi, je veux me fâcher, et ne veux point entendre.

PHILINTE

Dans vos brusques chagrins je ne puis vous comprendre,
Et, quoique amis enfin, je suis tout des premiers. . . .

[1] See p. lviii for the diagram of the stage.

ALCESTE

Moi, votre ami? Rayez cela de vos papiers.
J'ai fait jusques ici profession de l'être;
(*Il se lève brusquement.*)
Mais, après ce qu'en vous je viens de voir paraître,
Je vous déclare net que je ne le suis plus,
Et ne veux nulle place en des cœurs corrompus.

PHILINTE

Je suis donc bien coupable, Alceste, à votre compte?

ALCESTE

Allez, vous devriez mourir de pure honte;
Une telle action ne saurait s'excuser,
Et tout homme d'honneur s'en doit scandaliser.
Je vous vois accabler un homme de caresses,
Et témoigner pour lui les dernières tendresses;
De protestations, d'offres et de serments,
Vous chargez la fureur de vos embrassements;
Et quand je vous demande après quel est cet homme,
A peine pouvez-vous dire comme il se nomme;
Votre chaleur pour lui tombe en vous séparant,
Et vous me le traitez, à moi, d'indifférent!
Morbleu! c'est une chose indigne, lâche, infâme,
De s'abaisser ainsi jusqu'à trahir son âme;
Et si, par un malheur, j'en avais fait autant,
Je m'irais, de regret, pendre tout à l'instant.
(*Alceste va à droite*,[1] *devant les sièges 4, 5, et 6, et Philinte reste au milieu.*)

[1] Right and left directions are from point of view of audience.

PHILINTE

Je ne vois pas, pour moi, que le cas soit pendable;
Et je vous supplierai d'avoir pour agréable
Que je me fasse un peu grâce sur votre arrêt,
(*Alceste revient près de Philinte.*)
Et ne me pende pas pour cela, s'il vous plaît.

ALCESTE

Que la plaisanterie est de mauvaise grâce!

PHILINTE

Mais, sérieusement, que voulez-vous qu'on fasse?

ALCESTE

Je veux qu'on soit sincère, et qu'en homme d'honneur,
On ne lâche aucun mot qui ne parte du cœur.

PHILINTE

Lorsqu'un homme vous vient embrasser avec joie,
Il faut bien le payer de la même monnoie,
Répondre, comme on peut, à ses empressements,
Et rendre offre pour offre, et serments pour serments.

ALCESTE

Non, je ne puis souffrir cette lâche méthode
Qu'affectent la plupart de vos gens à la mode;
Et je ne hais rien tant que les contorsions
De tous ces grands faiseurs de protestations,
Ces affables donneurs d'embrassades frivoles.
Ces obligeants diseurs d'inutiles paroles,
Qui de civilités avec tous font combat,
Et traitent du même air l'honnête homme et le fat.

Quel avantage a-t-on qu'un homme vous caresse,
Vous jure amitié, foi, zèle, estime, tendresse,
Et vous fasse de vous un éloge éclatant,
Lorsqu'au premier faquin il court en faire autant?
Non, non, il n'est point d'âme un peu bien située
Qui veuille d'une estime ainsi prostituée;
Et la plus glorieuse a des régals peu chers,
Dès qu'on voit qu'on nous mêle avec tout l'univers.
Sur quelque préférence une estime se fonde,
Et c'est n'estimer rien qu'estimer tout le monde.
Puisque vous y donnez dans ces vices du temps,
Morbleu! vous n'êtes pas pour être de mes gens;
Je refuse d'un cœur la vaste complaisance
Qui ne fait de mérite aucune différence;
Je veux qu'on me distingue, et, pour le trancher net,
L'ami du genre humain n'est point du tout mon fait.
(*Il passe à droite.*)

PHILINTE

Mais, quand on est du monde, il faut bien que l'on rende
Quelques dehors civils que l'usage demande.

ALCESTE

(*Revenant auprès de Philinte*)

Non, vous dis-je, on devrait châtier sans pitié
Ce commerce honteux de semblants d'amitié.
Je veux que l'on soit homme, et qu'en toute rencontre
Le fond de notre cœur dans nos discours se montre,
Que ce soit lui qui parle, et que nos sentiments
Ne se masquent jamais sous de vains compliments.

PHILINTE

Il est bien des endroits où la pleine franchise
Deviendrait ridicule, et serait peu permise;
Et parfois, n'en déplaise à votre austère honneur,
Il est bon de cacher ce qu'on a dans le cœur.
Serait-il à propos et de la bienséance
De dire à mille gens tout ce que d'eux on pense?
Et, quand on a quelqu'un qu'on hait ou qui déplaît,
Lui doit-on déclarer la chose comme elle est?

ALCESTE

Oui.

PHILINTE

Quoi! vous iriez dire à la vieille Emilie
Qu'à son âge il sied mal de faire la jolie,
Et que le blanc qu'elle a scandalise chacun?

ALCESTE

Sans doute.

PHILINTE

A Dorilas, qu'il est trop importun,
Et qu'il n'est à la cour oreille qu'il ne lasse
A conter sa bravoure et l'éclat de sa race?

ALCESTE

Fort bien.

PHILINTE

(*Descend à gauche près des meubles. Alceste reste au milieu*)

Vous vous moquez.

ALCESTE

Je ne me moque point,
Et je vais n'épargner personne sur ce point.
Mes yeux sont trop blessés, et la cour et la ville
Ne m'offrent rien qu'objets à m'échauffer la bile.
J'entre en une humeur noire, en un chagrin profond,
Quand je vois vivre entre eux les hommes comme ils font.
Je ne trouve partout que lâche flatterie,
Qu'injustice, intérêt, trahison, fourberie;
Je n'y puis plus tenir, j'enrage; et mon dessein
Est de rompre en visière à tout le genre humain.

PHILINTE (*reste auprès d'Alceste*)

Ce chagrin philosophe est un peu trop sauvage.
Je ris des noirs accès où je vous envisage,
Et crois voir en nous deux, sous mêmes soins nourris,
Ces deux frères que peint *l'Ecole des Maris*,
Dont....

ALCESTE

Mon Dieu! laissons là vos comparaisons fades.

PHILINTE

Non: tout de bon, quittez toutes ces incartades.
Le monde par vos soins ne se changera pas:
Et puisque la franchise a pour vous tant d'appas,
Je vous dirai tout franc que cette maladie,
Partout où vous allez, donne la comédie,
Et qu'un si grand courroux contre les mœurs du temps
Vous tourne en ridicule auprès de bien des gens.
(*Ils sont tous deux au milieu.*)

ALCESTE

Tant mieux, morbleu ! tant mieux, c'est ce que je demande.
Ce m'est un fort bon signe, et ma joie en est grande.
Tous les hommes me sont à tel point odieux,
Que je serais fâché d'être sage à leurs yeux.

PHILINTE

Vous voulez un grand mal à la nature humaine!

ALCESTE

Oui, j'ai conçu pour elle une effroyable haine.

PHILINTE

Tous les pauvres mortels, sans nulle exception,
Seront enveloppés dans cette aversion?
Encore en est-il bien, dans le siècle où nous sommes....

ALCESTE

Non, elle est générale, et je hais tous les hommes:
Les uns, parce qu'ils sont méchants et malfaisants,
Et les autres, pour être aux méchants complaisants,
Et n'avoir pas pour eux ces haines vigoureuses
Que doit donner le vice aux âmes vertueuses.
De cette complaisance on voit l'injuste excès
Pour le franc scélérat avec qui j'ai procès.
Au travers de son masque on voit à plein le traître;
Partout il est connu pour tout ce qu'il peut être;
Et ses roulements d'yeux, et son ton radouci,
N'imposent qu'à des gens qui ne sont point d'ici.
On sait que ce pied-plat, digne qu'on le confonde,
Par de sales emplois s'est poussé dans le monde;
Et que par eux son sort, de splendeur revêtu,
Fait gronder le mérite et rougir la vertu.

Quelques titres honteux qu'en tous lieux on lui donne,
Son misérable honneur ne voit pour lui personne;
Nommez-le fourbe, infâme, et scélérat maudit,
Tout le monde en convient, et nul n'y contredit:
Cependant sa grimace est partout bienvenue;
On l'accueille, on lui rit, partout il s'insinue;
Et s'il est, par la brigue, un rang à disputer,
Sur le plus honnête homme on le voit l'emporter.
Têtebleu! ce me sont de mortelles blessures,
De voir qu'avec le vice on garde des mesures;
Et parfois il me prend des mouvements soudains
De fuir dans un désert l'approche des humains.

(*Alceste passe à droite.*)

PHILINTE

Mon Dieu! des mœurs du temps mettons-nous moins en peine,
Et faisons un peu grâce à la nature humaine:

(*Alceste revient doucement auprès de Philinte.*)

Ne l'examinons point dans la grande rigueur,
Et voyons ses défauts avec quelque douceur.
Il faut, parmi le monde, une vertu traitable;
A force de sagesse, on peut être blâmable;
La parfaite raison fuit toute extrémité,
Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobriété.
Cette grande raideur des vertus des vieux âges
Heurte trop notre siècle et les communs usages;
Elle veut aux mortels trop de perfection:
Il faut fléchir au temps sans obstination;
Et c'est une folie, à nulle autre seconde,
De vouloir se mêler de corriger le monde.
J'observe, comme vous, cent choses tous les jours,
Qui pourraient mieux aller, prenant un autre cours;

Mais, quoi qu'à chaque pas je puisse voir paraître,
En courroux, comme vous, on ne me voit point être.
Je prends tout doucement les hommes comme ils sont;
J'accoutume mon âme à souffrir ce qu'ils font;
Et je crois qu'à la cour, de même qu'à la ville,
Mon flegme est philosophe autant que votre bile.

(*Philinte descend à gauche. Alceste va à lui.*)

ALCESTE

Mais ce flegme, monsieur, qui raisonnez si bien,
Ce flegme pourra-t-il ne s'échauffer de rien?
Et s'il faut, par hasard, qu'un ami vous trahisse,
Que, pour avoir vos biens, on dresse un artifice,
Ou qu'on tâche à semer de méchants bruits de vous,
Verrez-vous tout cela sans vous mettre en courroux?

PHILINTE

Oui, je vois ces défauts, dont votre âme murmure,
Comme vices unis à l'humaine nature;
Et mon esprit enfin n'est pas plus offensé
De voir un homme fourbe, injuste, intéressé,
Que de voir des vautours affamés de carnage,
Des singes malfaisants, et des loups pleins de rage.

ALCESTE

(*Il revient au milieu. Philinte le suit.*)

Je me verrai trahir, mettre en pièces, voler,
Sans que je sois.... Morbleu! je ne veux point parler,
Tant ce raisonnement est plein d'impertinence!

(*Alceste passe à droite.*)

PHILINTE

(*Descendant un peu à gauche*)

Ma foi ! vous ferez bien de garder le silence.
Contre votre partie éclatez un peu moins,
Et donnez au procès une part de vos soins.
(*Alceste revient auprès de Philinte. Tous deux sont au milieu.*)

ALCESTE

Je n'en donnerai point, c'est une chose dite.

PHILINTE

Mais qui voulez-vous donc qui pour vous sollicite?

ALCESTE

Qui je veux? La raison, mon bon droit, l'équité.

PHILINTE

Aucun juge par vous ne sera visité?

ALCESTE

Non. Est-ce que ma cause est injuste ou douteuse?

PHILINTE

J'en demeure d'accord; mais la brigue est fâcheuse,
Et . . .

ALCESTE

Non. J'ai résolu de n'en pas faire un pas.
J'ai tort, ou j'ai raison.

PHILINTE

Ne vous y fiez pas.

ALCESTE

Je ne remuerai point.

PHILINTE

Votre partie est forte,
Et peut, par sa cabale, entraîner. . . .

ALCESTE

Il n'importe.

PHILINTE

Vous vous tromperez.

ALCESTE

Soit. J'en veux voir le succès.

PHILINTE

Mais. . . .

ALCESTE

J'aurai le plaisir de perdre mon procès.

PHILINTE

Mais enfin. . . .

ALCESTE

Je verrai dans cette plaiderie,
Si les hommes auront assez d'effronterie,
Seront assez méchants, scélérats et pervers,
Pour me faire injustice aux yeux de l'univers.

PHILINTE

(*Passant un peu à gauche et revenant ensuite*)
Quel homme !

ALCESTE

Je voudrais, m'en coûtât-il grand'chose,
Pour la beauté du fait, avoir perdu ma cause.
(*Il passe à droite. Un petit temps.*)

PHILINTE

On se rirait de vous, Alceste, tout de bon,
Si l'on vous entendait parler de la façon.

ALCESTE

Tant pis pour qui rirait.
(*Il revient au milieu.*)

PHILINTE

Mais cette rectitude
Que vous voulez en tout avec exactitude,
Cette pleine droiture où vous vous renfermez,
La trouvez-vous ici dans ce que vous aimez?
Je m'étonne, pour moi, qu'étant, comme il le semble,
Vous et le genre humain si fort brouillés ensemble,
Malgré tout ce qui peut vous le rendre odieux,
(*Il va s'appuyer sur le dossier du siège 4.*)
Vous ayez pris chez lui ce qui charme vos yeux;
Et ce qui me surprend encore davantage,
C'est cet étrange choix où votre cœur s'engage.
La sincère Eliante a du penchant pour vous;
La prude Arsinoé vous voit d'un œil fort doux;
Cependant à leurs vœux votre âme se refuse,
Tandis qu'en ses liens Célimène l'amuse,
De qui l'humeur coquette et l'esprit médisant
Semble si fort donner dans les mœurs d'à présent.

D'où vient que, leur portant une haine mortelle,
Vous pouvez bien souffrir ce qu'en tient cette belle?
Ne sont-ce plus défauts dans un objet si doux?
Ne les voyez-vous pas, ou les excusez-vous?

ALCESTE

Non. L'amour que je sens pour cette jeune veuve
Ne ferme point mes yeux aux défauts qu'on lui treuve;
Et je suis, quelque ardeur qu'elle m'ait pu donner,
Le premier à les voir, comme à les condamner.
Mais avec tout cela, quoi que je puisse faire,
Je confesse mon faible; elle a l'art de me plaire.
J'ai beau voir ses défauts, et j'ai beau l'en blâmer;
En dépit qu'on en ait, elle se fait aimer:
Sa grâce est la plus forte; et sans doute ma flamme
(*Alceste vient à Philinte.*)
De ces vices du temps pourra purger son âme.

PHILINTE (*passant à gauche*)

Si vous faites cela, vous ne ferez pas peu.
Vous croyez être donc aimé d'elle?

ALCESTE (*allant à Philinte*)

Oui, parbleu!
Je ne l'aimerais pas, si je ne croyais l'être.

PHILINTE

Mais, si son amitié pour vous se fait paraître,
D'où vient que vos rivaux vous causent de l'ennui?

ALCESTE

C'est qu'un cœur bien atteint veut qu'on soit tout à lui;
Et je ne viens ici qu'à dessein de lui dire
Tout ce que là-dessus ma passion m'inspire.

PHILINTE

Pour moi, si je n'avais qu'à former des désirs,
Sa cousine Eliante aurait tous mes soupirs;
Son cœur, qui vous estime, est solide et sincère,
Et ce choix plus conforme était mieux votre affaire.

ALCESTE

Il est vrai: ma raison me le dit chaque jour;
Mais la raison n'est pas ce qui règle l'amour.

PHILINTE

Je crains fort pour vos feux, et l'espoir où vous êtes
Pourrait....

SCENE II

ORONTE, ALCESTE, PHILINTE

(Oronte entre à droite, porte C; il passe derrière les sièges et vient auprès du siège 4; il salue les deux hommes qui lui rendent son salut. Oronte se recouvre et parle.)

ORONTE (*à Alceste*)

J'ai su là-bas que, pour quelques emplettes,
Eliante est sortie, et Célimène aussi;
Mais, comme l'on m'a dit que vous étiez ici,
J'ai monté pour vous dire, et d'un cœur véritable,
Que j'ai conçu pour vous une estime incroyable,
Et que, depuis longtemps, cette estime m'a mis
Dans un ardent désir d'être de vos amis.
Oui, mon cœur au mérite aime à rendre justice,
Et je brûle qu'un nœud d'amitié nous unisse.

Je crois qu'un ami chaud, et de ma qualité,
N'est pas assurément pour être rejeté.
(*Un temps. Alceste, immobile. Oronte se rapproche d'un pas. Pendant le discours d'Oronte, Alceste est rêveur, et semble ne pas entendre que c'est à lui qu'on parle. Il ne sort de sa rêverie que quand Oronte lui dit:*)
C'est à vous, s'il vous plaît, que ce discours s'adresse.

ALCESTE

A moi, monsieur?
(*Il recule d'un pas en se retournant vers Oronte en remontant.*)

ORONTE

A vous. Trouvez-vous qu'il vous blesse?

ALCESTE

Non pas. Mais la surprise est fort grande pour moi,
Et je n'attendais pas l'honneur que je reçoi.
(*Il redescend d'un pas.*)

ORONTE

L'estime où je vous tiens ne doit point vous surprendre,
Et de tout l'univers vous la pouvez prétendre.

ALCESTE

Monsieur....
(*Philinte est en avant du siège 2, Alceste presque au milieu, Oronte près du siège 4, en avant.*)

ORONTE

L'Etat n'a rien qui ne soit au-dessous
Du mérite éclatant que l'on découvre en vous.

ALCESTE

Monsieur....

ORONTE

Oui, de ma part, je vous tiens préférable
A tout ce que j'y vois de plus considérable.

ALCESTE

Monsieur....

ORONTE

Sois-je du ciel écrasé, si je mens!
Et, pour vous confirmer ici mes sentiments,
Souffrez qu'à cœur ouvert, monsieur, je vous embrasse,
Et qu'en votre amitié je vous demande place.
Touchez là, s'il vous plaît. Vous me la promettez
Votre amitié?

ALCESTE

Monsieur....

ORONTE

Quoi! vous y résistez?

ALCESTE

Monsieur, c'est trop d'honneur que vous me voulez faire;
Mais l'amitié demande un peu plus de mystère;
Et c'est assurément en profaner le nom
Que de vouloir le mettre à toute occasion.
Avec lumière et choix cette union veut naître;
Avant que nous lier, il faut nous mieux connaître;
Et nous pourrions avoir telles complexions,
Que tous deux du marché nous nous repentirions.

ORONTE

Parbleu ! c'est là-dessus parler en homme sage,
Et je vous en estime encore davantage.
Souffrons donc que le temps forme des nœuds si doux;
Mais cependant je m'offre entièrement à vous.
S'il faut faire à la cour pour vous quelque ouverture,
On sait qu'auprès du roi je fais quelque figure;
Il m'écoute; et dans tout il en use, ma foi,
Le plus honnêtement du monde avec moi.
Enfin je suis à vous de toutes les manières;
Et, comme votre esprit a de grandes lumières,
Je viens, pour commencer entre nous ce beau nœud,
Vous montrer un sonnet que j'ai fait depuis peu,
(*Il tire un papier de sa poche.*)
Et savoir s'il est bon qu'au public je l'expose.

ALCESTE

Monsieur, je suis mal propre à décider la chose;
Veuillez m'en dispenser.

ORONTE

Pourquoi?

ALCESTE

J'ai le défaut
D'être un peu plus sincère en cela qu'il ne faut.

ORONTE

C'est ce que je demande, et j'aurais lieu de plainte,
Si, m'exposant à vous pour me parler sans feinte,
Vous alliez me trahir, et me déguiser rien.

ALCESTE

Puisqu'il vous plaît ainsi, monsieur, je le veux bien.

ORONTE

(*Lisant. Philinte se rapproche d'un pas*)

Sonnet. C'est un sonnet.... *L'espoir....* C'est une dame

Qui de quelque espérance avait flatté ma flamme;

L'espoir.... Ce ne sont point de ces grands vers pompeux,

Mais de petits vers doux, tendres et langoureux.

ALCESTE (*au milieu*)

Nous verrons bien.

ORONTE

L'espoir.... Je ne sais si le style

Pourra vous en paraître assez net et facile,

Et si du choix des mots vous vous contenterez.

ALCESTE

Nous allons voir, monsieur.

ORONTE

Au reste, vous saurez

Que je n'ai demeuré qu'un quart d'heure à le faire.

ALCESTE

Voyons, monsieur; le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire.

ORONTE (*lisant*)

L'espoir, il est vrai, nous soulage,

Et nous berce un temps notre ennui;

Mais, Philis, le triste avantage,

Lorsque rien ne marche après lui!

PHILINTE

Je suis déjà charmé de ce petit morceau.

ALCESTE (*bas, à Philinte*)

Quoi ! vous avez le front de trouver cela beau ?

ORONTE

Vous eûtes de la complaisance;
Mais vous en deviez moins avoir,
Et ne vous pas mettre en dépense
Pour ne me donner que l'espoir.

PHILINTE

Ah ! qu'en termes galants ces choses-là sont mises !

ALCESTE (*bas, à Philinte*)

Morbleu ! vil complaisant, vous louez des sottises ?

ORONTE

S'il faut qu'une attente éternelle
Pousse à bout l'ardeur de mon zèle,
Le trépas sera mon recours.

Vos soins ne m'en peuvent distraire;
Belle Philis, on désespère,
Alors qu'on espère toujours.

PHILINTE

La chute en est jolie, amoureuse, admirable.

ALCESTE (*bas, à part*)

La peste de ta chute, empoisonneur au diable !
En eusses-tu fait une à te casser le nez !

PHILINTE, (*allant à Oronte*)

Je n'ai jamais ouï de vers si bien tournés.

ALCESTE

(*A part, descendant un peu à gauche*)

Morbleu !

ORONTE (*à Philinte*)

Vous me flattez, et vous croyez peut-être . . .

PHILINTE

Non, je ne flatte point.

ALCESTE (*bas, à Philinte*)

Hé ! que fais-tu donc, traître ?

ORONTE

(*A Alceste. Philinte recule de deux pas*)

Mais, pour vous, vous savez quel est notre traité :
Parlez-moi, je vous prie, avec sincérité.

ALCESTE

Monsieur, cette matière est toujours délicate,
Et sur le bel esprit nous aimons qu'on nous flatte.
Mais un jour, à quelqu'un, dont je tairai le nom,
Je disais, en voyant des vers de sa façon,
Qu'il faut qu'un galant homme ait toujours grand empire
Sur les démangeaisons qui nous prennent d'écrire ;
Qu'il doit tenir la bride aux grands empressements
Qu'on a de faire éclat de tels amusements ;
Et que, par la chaleur de montrer ses ouvrages,
On s'expose à jouer de mauvais personnages.

ORONTE

Est-ce que vous voulez me déclarer par là
Que j'ai tort de vouloir. . . .

ALCESTE

Je ne dis pas cela.
Mais je lui disais, moi, qu'un froid écrit assomme;
Qu'il ne faut que ce faible à décrier un homme;
Et, qu'eût-on d'autre part cent belles qualités,
On regarde les gens par leurs méchants côtés.

ORONTE

Est-ce qu'à mon sonnet vous trouvez à redire?

ALCESTE

(*Reculant d'un pas en remontant*)
Je ne dis pas cela. Mais pour ne point écrire,
Je lui mettais aux yeux comme, dans notre temps,
Cette soif a gâté de fort honnêtes gens.

ORONTE

Est-ce que j'écris mal et leur ressemblerais-je?

ALCESTE

Je ne dis pas cela. Mais enfin, lui disais-je,
Quel besoin si pressant avez-vous de rimer?
Et qui diantre vous pousse à vous faire imprimer?
Si l'on peut pardonner l'essor d'un mauvais livre,
Ce n'est qu'aux malheureux qui composent pour vivre.

Croyez-moi, résistez à vos tentations;
Dérobez au public ces occupations;
Et n'allez point quitter, de quoi que l'on vous somme,
Le nom que dans la cour vous avez d'honnête homme,
Pour prendre, de la main d'un avide imprimeur,
Celui de ridicule et misérable auteur:
(*Un temps. Changeant de ton.*)
C'est ce que je tâchai de lui faire comprendre.

ORONTE

Voilà qui va fort bien, et je crois vous entendre.
Mais ne puis-je savoir ce que dans mon sonnet....
(*Il tend son sonnet à Alceste, qui le prend.*)

ALCESTE

Franchement, il est bon à mettre au cabinet.
Vous vous êtes réglé sur de méchants modèles,
Et vos expressions ne sont point naturelles.

Qu'est-ce que, *Nous berce un temps notre ennui?*
Et que, *Rien ne marche après lui?*
Que, *Ne vous pas mettre en dépense*
Pour ne me donner que l'espoir?
Et que, *Philis, on désespère,*
Alors qu'on espère toujours?

(*Il rend le sonnet à Oronte.*)
Ce style figuré, dont on fait vanité,
Sort du bon caractère et de la vérité;
Ce n'est que jeu de mots, qu'affectation pure,
Et ce n'est point ainsi que parle la nature.
Le méchant goût du siècle en cela me fait peur:
Nos pères, tous grossiers, l'avaient beaucoup meilleur;

Et je prise bien moins tout ce que l'on admire,
Qu'une vieille chanson que je m'en vais vous dire:
(*Oronte va à droite. Philinte en avant des sièges à gauche. Alceste au milieu.*)

Si le roi m'avait donné
Paris, sa grand' ville,
Et qu'il me fallût quitter
L'amour de ma mie,
Je dirais au roi Henri:
« Reprenez votre Paris,
J'aime mieux ma mie, ô gué!
J'aime mieux ma mie. »

La rime n'est pas riche, et le style en est vieux:
Mais ne voyez-vous pas que cela vaut bien mieux
Que ces colifichets dont le bon sens murmure,
Et que la passion parle là toute pure?

Si le roi m'avait donné
Paris, sa grand' ville,
Et qu'il me fallût quitter
L'amour de ma mie,
Je dirais au roi Henri:
« Reprenez votre Paris,
J'aime mieux ma mie, ô gué!
J'aime mieux ma mie. »

Voilà ce que peut dire un cœur vraiment épris.
(*A Philinte qui rit:*)
Oui, monsieur le rieur, malgré vos beaux esprits,
J'estime plus cela que la pompe fleurie
De tous ces faux brillants où chacun se récrie.

ORONTE

Et moi, je vous soutiens que mes vers sont fort bons.

ALCESTE

Pour les trouver ainsi, vous avez vos raisons;
Mais vous trouverez bon que j'en puisse avoir d'autres
Qui se dispenseront de se soumettre aux vôtres.

ORONTE

Il me suffit de voir que d'autres en font cas.
(*Philinte remonte par la gauche au-dessus des meubles.*)

ALCESTE

C'est qu'ils ont l'art de feindre; et moi, je ne l'ai pas.

ORONTE

Croyez-vous donc avoir tant d'esprit en partage?

ALCESTE

Si je louais vos vers, j'en aurais davantage.

ORONTE

Je me passerai bien que vous les approuviez.

ALCESTE

Il faut bien, s'il vous plaît, que vous vous en passiez.

ORONTE

Je voudrais bien, pour voir, que de votre manière
Vous en composassiez sur la même matière.

ALCESTE

J'en pourrais, par malheur, faire d'aussi méchants;
Mais je me garderais de les montrer aux gens.

ORONTE

Vous me parlez bien ferme, et cette suffisance . . .

ALCESTE (*allant à Oronte*)

Autre part que chez moi cherchez qui vous encense.

ORONTE

Mais, mon petit monsieur, prenez-le un peu moins haut.

ALCESTE

Ma foi, mon grand monsieur, je le prends comme il faut.

PHILINTE

(*Qui a suivi la querelle, descend entre eux*)

Hé! messieurs, c'en est trop. Laissez cela, de grâce.

ORONTE

Ah! j'ai tort, je l'avoue, et je quitte la place.
Je suis votre valet, monsieur, de tout mon cœur.
(*Oronte se couvre.*)

ALCESTE (*se couvre aussi*)

Et moi, je suis, monsieur, votre humble serviteur.
(*Oronte sort à droite, porte C, en passant derrière les meubles. Alceste passe devant Philinte et va à droite. Philinte le suit.*)

SCENE III

PHILINTE, ALCESTE

PHILINTE

Eh bien ! vous le voyez: pour être trop sincère
Vous voilà sur les bras une fâcheuse affaire;
Et j'ai bien vu qu'Oronte, afin d'être flatté . . .

ALCESTE

(*Continuant à marcher, repasse devant Philinte et va à gauche. Philinte le suit*)
Ne me parlez pas.

PHILINTE

Mais . . .

ALCESTE

Plus de société.

PHILINTE

C'est trop . . .

ALCESTE

(*Repassant à droite. Philinte reste près du siège 3*)
Laissez-moi là.

PHILINTE

Si je . . .

ALCESTE

Point de langage.

PHILINTE

Mais quoi . . .

ALCESTE

(*Remontant au fond, suivi de Philinte*)
Je n'entends rien.

PHILINTE

Mais . . .

ALCESTE

Encore?
(*Il ouvre la porte du fond.*)

PHILINTE

On outrage . . .

ALCESTE

Ah! parbleu! c'en est trop. Ne suivez point mes pas.

PHILINTE

Vous vous moquez de moi. Je ne vous quitte pas.
(*Ils sortent au fond à droite pendant que le rideau baisse.*)

FIN DU PREMIER ACTE

(*Pas d'entr'acte.*)

ACTE SECOND

(*Au lever du rideau, la porte du fond s'ouvre. Alceste, donnant la main droite à Célimène. Ils entrent du fond à droite et viennent au milieu. Ils se quittent la main.*)

SCENE PREMIERE

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE

ALCESTE

Madame, voulez-vous que je vous parle net?
De vos façons d'agir je suis mal satisfait;
Contre elles dans mon cœur trop de bile s'assemble,
Et je sens qu'il faudra que nous rompions ensemble.
Oui, je vous tromperais de parler autrement;
Tôt ou tard nous romprons indubitablement;
Et je vous promettrais mille fois le contraire,
Que je ne serais pas en pouvoir de le faire.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est pour me quereller donc, à ce que je voi,
Que vous avez voulu me ramener chez moi?
(*Célimène descend un peu à gauche. Alceste au milieu.*)

ALCESTE

Je ne querelle point. Mais votre humeur, madame,
Ouvre au premier venu trop d'accès dans votre âme:
Vous avez trop d'amants qu'on voit vous obséder;
Et mon cœur de cela ne peut s'accommoder.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Revenant vers Alceste*)

Des amants que je fais me rendez-vous coupable?
Puis-je empêcher les gens de me trouver aimable?
Et lorsque pour me voir ils font de doux efforts,
Dois-je prendre un bâton pour les mettre dehors?

ALCESTE

Non, ce n'est pas, madame, un bâton qu'il faut prendre,
Mais un cœur à leurs vœux moins facile et moins tendre.
Je sais que vos appas vous suivent en tous lieux;
Mais votre accueil retient ceux qu'attirent vos yeux;
Et sa douceur offerte à qui vous rend les armes,
Achève sur les cœurs l'ouvrage de vos charmes.
Le trop riant espoir que vous leur présentez
Attache autour de vous leurs assiduités;
Et votre complaisance, un peu moins étendue,
De tant de soupirants chasserait la cohue.
Mais au moins, dites-moi, madame, par quel sort
Votre Clitandre a l'heur de vous plaire si fort?
Sur quel fonds de mérite et de vertu sublime
Appuyez-vous en lui l'honneur de votre estime?
Est-ce par l'ongle long qu'il porte au petit doigt
Qu'il s'est acquis chez vous l'estime où l'on le voit?
Vous êtes-vous rendue, avec tout le beau monde,
Au mérite éclatant de sa perruque blonde?
Sont-ce ses grands canons qui vous le font aimer?
L'amas de ses rubans a-t-il su vous charmer?
Est-ce par les appas de sa vaste rhingrave
Qu'il a gagné votre âme en faisant votre esclave?
Ou sa façon de rire, et son ton de fausset,
Ont-ils de vous toucher su trouver le secret?

CÉLIMÈNE

Qu'injustement de lui vous prenez de l'ombrage!
Ne savez-vous pas bien pourquoi je le ménage,
Et que dans mon procès, ainsi qu'il m'a promis,
Il peut intéresser tout ce qu'il a d'amis?

ALCESTE

Perdez votre procès, madame, avec constance,
Et ne ménagez point un rival qui m'offense.

CÉLIMÈNE

Mais de tout l'univers vous devenez jaloux.

ALCESTE

(*Faisant deux pas à droite*)
C'est que tout l'univers est bien reçu de vous.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est ce qui doit rasseoir votre âme effarouchée,
Puisque ma complaisance est sur tous épanchée;
Et vous auriez plus lieu de vous en offenser,
Si vous me la voyiez sur un seul ramasser.

ALCESTE

Mais moi, que vous blâmez de trop de jalousie,
(*Il revient auprès de Célimène.*)
Qu'ai-je de plus qu'eux tous, madame, je vous prie?

CÉLIMÈNE

Le bonheur de savoir que vous êtes aimé.

ALCESTE

Et quel lieu de le croire a mon cœur enflammé?

CÉLIMÈNE

Je pense qu'ayant pris le soin de vous le dire,
Un aveu de la sorte a de quoi vous suffire.

ALCESTE

Mais qui m'assurera que, dans le même instant,
Vous n'en disiez peut-être aux autres tout autant?

CÉLIMÈNE

Certes, pour un amant, la fleurette est mignonne,
Et vous me traitez là de gentille personne.
Eh bien, pour vous ôter d'un semblable souci,
De tout ce que j'ai dit je me dédis ici;
Et rien ne saurait plus vous tromper que vous-même:
Soyez content.

(*Elle descend à gauche. Alceste au milieu.*)

ALCESTE

Morbleu! faut-il que je vous aime!
Ah! que si de vos mains je rattrape mon cœur,
Je bénirai le ciel de ce rare bonheur!

(*Célimène revient auprès d'Alceste, tout en restant en avant du meuble 2.*)

Je ne le cèle pas, je fais tout mon possible
A rompre de ce cœur l'attachement terrible;
Mais mes plus grands efforts n'ont rien fait jusqu'ici,
Et c'est pour mes péchés que je vous aime ainsi.

CÉLIMÈNE

Il est vrai, votre ardeur est pour moi sans seconde.

ALCESTE

Oui, je puis là-dessus défier tout le monde.
Mon amour ne se peut concevoir, et jamais
Personne n'a, madame, aimé comme je fais.
(*Il se rapproche de Célimène.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

En effet, la méthode en est toute nouvelle,
Car vous aimez les gens pour leur faire querelle;
Ce n'est qu'en mots fâcheux qu'éclate votre ardeur,
Et l'on n'a vu jamais un amour si grondeur.

ALCESTE

Mais il ne tient qu'à vous que son chagrin ne passe.
A tous nos démêlés coupons chemin, de grâce;
Parlons à cœur ouvert, et voyons d'arrêter . . .

SCENE II

CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE, BASQUE

(*Basque entre par la porte C à droite et vient au-dessus du siège 5. Célimène remonte un peu*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Qu'est-ce?

BASQUE

Acaste est là-bas.

CÉLIMÈNE

Eh bien, faites monter.

(*Basque sort à droite porte C. Alceste gagne à droite devant les sièges. Célimène au milieu.*)

SCENE III

Célimène, Alceste

ALCESTE

Quoi ! l'on ne peut jamais vous parler tête à tête !
A recevoir le monde on vous voit toujours prête !
Et vous ne pouvez pas, un seul moment de tous,
Vous résoudre à souffrir de n'être pas chez vous !

CÉLIMÈNE

Voulez-vous qu'avec lui je me fasse une affaire ?

ALCESTE

Vous avez des regards qui ne sauraient me plaire.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est un homme à jamais ne me le pardonner,
S'il savait que sa vue eût pu m'importuner.

ALCESTE

Et que vous fait cela pour vous gêner de sorte ? . . .

CÉLIMÈNE

Mon Dieu ! de ses pareils la bienveillance importe;
Et ce sont de ces gens qui, je ne sais comment,
Ont gagné, dans la cour, de parler hautement.
Dans tous les entretiens on les voit s'introduire;
Ils ne sauraient servir, mais ils peuvent vous nuire;
Et jamais, quelque appui qu'on puisse avoir d'ailleurs,
On ne doit se brouiller avec ces grands brailleurs.

ALCESTE

(*Venant auprès de Célimène*)

Enfin, quoi qu'il en soit, et sur quoi qu'on se fonde,
Vous trouvez des raisons pour souffrir tout le monde;
Et les précautions de votre jugement . . .

SCENE IV

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, BASQUE

(*Basque rentre par la porte C et reste sur le seuil*)

BASQUE

Voici Clitandre encor madame.

ALCESTE

(*Remontant au fond*)

Justement.

CÉLIMÈNE

Où courez-vous?

ALCESTE

Je sors.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Remonte à Alceste, qui descend un peu*)

Demeurez.

ALCESTE

Pour quoi faire?

CÉLIMÈNE

Demeurez

ALCESTE

Je ne puis.

CÉLIMÈNE

Je le veux.

ALCESTE

Point d'affaire
Ces conversations ne font que m'ennuyer,
Et c'est trop que vouloir me les faire essuyer.

CÉLIMÈNE

Je le veux, je le veux.

ALCESTE

Non il m'est impossible.

CÉLIMÈNE

Eh bien, allez, sortez; il vous est tout loisible.

(*Alceste remonte tout à fait et va au fond à gauche. Célimène au milieu au-dessus. Entre par la porte C Eliante à qui Philinte donne sa main droite; ils viennent à Célimène; salutations; puis ils descendent à droite. Eliante quitte la main de Philinte.*)

SCENE V

ELIANTE, PHILINTE, ACASTE, CLITANDRE, ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, BASQUE

ÉLIANTE (*à Célimène*)

Voici les deux marquis qui montent avec nous.
Vous l'est-on venu dire?

CÉLIMÈNE

Oui.
(*A Basque:*) Des sièges pour tous.

(*Alceste est descendu à l'extrême gauche. Célimène se retourne, l'aperçoit et va à lui. Basque vient prendre le siège 3 et le met au milieu pendant que deux valets, qui sont entrés par la porte C, rapprochent les sièges 4, 5, et 6 du milieu. Basque approche le siège 2 du siège 3 et sort à droite avec les deux valets.*)

(*A Alceste:*)
Vous n'êtes pas sorti?

ALCESTE

Non; mais je veux, madame,
Ou pour eux, ou pour moi, faire expliquer votre âme.

CÉLIMÈNE

Taisez-vous.

ALCESTE

Aujourd'hui vous vous expliquerez.

CÉLIMÈNE

Vous perdez le sens.

ALCESTE

Point. Vous vous déclarerez.

CÉLIMÈNE

Ah!

ALCESTE

Vous prendrez parti.

CÉLIMÈNE

Vous vous moquez, je pense.

ALCESTE

Non. Mais vous choisirez; c'est trop de patience.

(*Clitandre et Acaste entrent vivement par la porte C en faisant des grâces et des salutations exagérées. Clitandre vient entre les sièges 2 et 3; Acaste entre les sièges 3, 4. Célimène est venue devant le siège 3 et se trouve entre eux. Acaste passe devant Eliante et Philante en saluant, et va au siège 6, sur lequel il s'assied en faisant une pirouette. Alceste tourne le siège 1 vers le mur de gauche et s'assied en tournant le dos aux personnages. On s'assied.*)

CLITANDRE

Parbleu! je viens du Louvre, où Cléonte, au levé,
Madame, a bien paru ridicule achevé.
N'a-t-il point quelque ami qui pût, sur ses manières,
D'un charitable avis lui prêter les lumières?

CÉLIMÈNE

Dans le monde, à vrai dire, il se barbouille fort;
Partout il porte un air qui saute aux yeux d'abord;

Et lorsqu'on le revoit après un peu d'absence,
On le retrouve encor plus plein d'extravagance.

ACASTE

Parbleu ! s'il faut parler de gens extravagants,
Je viens d'en essuyer un des plus fatigants;
Damon le raisonneur, qui m'a, ne vous déplaise,
Une heure, au grand soleil, tenu hors de ma chaise.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est un parleur étrange, et qui trouve toujours
L'art de ne vous rien dire avec de grands discours:
Dans les propos qu'il tient on ne voit jamais goutte,
Et ce n'est que du bruit que tout ce qu'on écoute.

ÉLIANTE (*à Philinte*)

Ce début n'est pas mal; et contre le prochain
La conversation prend un assez bon train.

CLITANDRE

Timante encor, madame, est un bon caractère.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est de la tête aux pieds un homme tout mystère,
Qui vous jette, en passant, un coup d'œil égaré,
Et, sans aucune affaire, est toujours affairé.
Tout ce qu'il vous débite en grimaces abonde;
A force de façons, il assomme le monde;
Sans cesse il a, tout bas, pour rompre l'entretien,
Un secret à vous dire, et ce secret n'est rien;
De la moindre vétille il fait une merveille,
Et, jusques au bonjour, il dit tout à l'oreille.
(*Acaste et Clitandre rient ensemble.*)

ACASTE

Et Géralde, madame?

CÉLIMÈNE

O l'ennuyeux conteur!
Jamais on ne le voit sortir du grand seigneur.
Dans le brillant commerce il se mêle sans cesse,
Et ne cite jamais que duc, prince, ou princesse,
La qualité l'entête; et tous ses entretiens
Ne sont que de chevaux, d'équipage, et de chiens:
Il tutaye, en parlant, ceux du plus haut étage,
Et le nom de monsieur est chez lui hors d'usage.

(*Acaste et Clitandre rient un peu plus fort.*)

CLITANDRE

On dit qu'avec Bélise il est du dernier bien.

CÉLIMÈNE

Le pauvre esprit de femme, et le sec entretien!
Lorsqu'elle vient me voir, je souffre le martyre;
Il faut suer sans cesse à chercher que lui dire;
Et la stérilité de son expression
Fait mourir à tous coups la conversation.
En vain, pour attaquer son stupide silence,
De tous les lieux communs vous prenez l'assistance;
Le beau temps et la pluie, et le froid et le chaud,
Sont des fonds qu'avec elle on épuise bientôt.
Cependant sa visite, assez insupportable,
Traîne en une longueur encore épouvantable;
Et l'on demande l'heure, et l'on bâille vingt fois,
Qu'elle grouille aussi peu qu'une pièce de bois.

(*Rire de tous, sauf Alceste.*)

ACASTE

Que vous semble d'Adraste?

CÉLIMÈNE

Ah! quel orgueil extrême!
C'est un homme gonflé de l'amour de soi-même
Son mérite jamais n'est content de la cour;
Contre elle il fait métier de pester chaque jour;
Et l'on ne donne emploi, charge, ni bénéfice,
Qu'à tout ce qu'il se croit on ne fasse injustice.

CLITANDRE

Mais le jeune Cléon, chez qui vont aujourd'hui
Nos plus honnêtes gens, que dites-vous de lui?

CÉLIMÈNE

Que de son cuisinier il s'est fait un mérite
Et que c'est à sa table à qui l'on rend visite.

ÉLIANTE

Il prend soin d'y servir des mets fort délicats.

CÉLIMÈNE

Oui; mais je voudrais bien qu'il ne s'y servît pas;
C'est un fort méchant plat que sa sotte personne,
Et qui gâte, à mon goût, tous les repas qu'il donne.
(*Rires bruyants des deux marquis.*)

PHILINTE

On fait assez de cas de son oncle Damis;
Qu'en dites-vous, madame?

CÉLIMÈNE

Il est de mes amis.

PHILINTE

Je le trouve honnête homme, et d'un air assez sage.

CÉLIMÈNE

Oui; mais il veut avoir trop d'esprit, dont j'enrage.
Il est guindé sans cesse; et, dans tous ses propos,
On voit qu'il se travaille à dire de bons mots.
Depuis que dans la tête il s'est mis d'être habile
Rien ne touche son goût, tant il est difficile.
Il veut voir des défauts à tout ce qu'on écrit,
Et pense que louer n'est pas d'un bel esprit;
Que c'est être savant que trouver à redire;
Qu'il n'appartient qu'aux sots d'admirer et de rire;
Et qu'en n'approuvant rien des ouvrages du temps,
Il se met au-dessus de tous les autres gens.
Aux conversations même il trouve à reprendre:
Ce sont propos trop bas pour y daigner descendre;
Et, les deux bras croisés, du haut de son esprit,
Il regarde en pitié tout ce que chacun dit.

ACASTE

Dieu me damne! voilà son portrait véritable.

CLITANDRE (*à Célimène*)

Pour bien peindre les gens vous êtes admirable.

ALCESTE

(*Assis tournant le dos, ne se retourne pas pour dire le couplet suivant*)

Allons, ferme, poussez, mes bons amis de cour;
Vous n'en épargnez point, et chacun a son tour:

Cependant aucun d'eux à vos yeux ne se montre,
Qu'on ne vous voie en hâte aller à sa rencontre,
Lui présenter la main, et d'un baiser flatteur
Appuyer les serments d'être son serviteur.

CLITANDRE

Pourquoi s'en prendre à nous? Si ce qu'on dit vous blesse,
Il faut que le reproche à madame s'adresse.

ALCESTE

(*Se tournant un peu vers les personnages*)

Non, morbleu! c'est à vous; et vos ris complaisants
Tirent de son esprit tous ces traits médisants.
Son humeur satirique est sans cesse nourrie
Par le coupable encens de votre flatterie;
Et son cœur à railler trouverait moins d'appas,
S'il avait observé qu'on ne l'applaudît pas.
C'est ainsi qu'aux flatteurs on doit partout se prendre
Des vices où l'on voit les humains se répandre.

PHILINTE

Mais pourquoi pour ces gens un intérêt si grand,
Vous qui condamneriez ce qu'en eux on reprend?

CÉLIMÈNE

Et ne faut-il pas bien que monsieur contredise?
A la commune voix veut-on qu'il se réduise,
Et qu'il ne fasse pas éclater en tous lieux
L'esprit contrariant qu'il a reçu des cieux?
Le sentiment d'autrui n'est jamais pour lui plaire;
Il prend toujours en main l'opinion contraire;
Et penserait paraître un homme du commun,
Si l'on voyait qu'il fût de l'avis de quelqu'un.

L'honneur de contredire a pour lui tant de charmes,
Qu'il prend contre lui-même assez souvent les armes;
Et ses vrais sentiments sont combattus par lui,
Aussitôt qu'il les voit dans la bouche d'autrui.
(*Rire général. Alceste se retourne vers la gauche*)

ALCESTE

Les rieurs sont pour vous, madame, c'est tout dire;
Et vous pouvez pousser contre moi la satire.

PHILINTE

Mais il est véritable aussi que votre esprit
Se gendarme toujours contre tout ce qu'on dit;
Et que, par un chagrin que lui-même il avoue,
Il ne saurait souffrir qu'on blâme ni qu'on loue.

ALCESTE

C'est que jamais, morbleu ! les hommes n'ont raison,
Que le chagrin contre eux est toujours de saison,
Et que je vois qu'ils sont, sur toutes les affaires,
Loueurs impertinents, ou censeurs téméraires.

CÉLIMÈNE

Mais . . .

ALCESTE

(*Se retourne encore vers les personnages tout en restant assis*)
Non, madame, non, quand j'en devrais mourir,
Vous avez des plaisirs que je ne puis souffrir;
Et l'on a tort ici de nourrir dans votre âme
Ce grand attachement aux défauts qu'on y blâme.

CLITANDRE

(*Se levant sur place, s'adresse à Célimène*)

Pour moi, je ne sais pas; mais j'avouerai tout haut
Que j'ai cru jusqu'ici madame sans défaut.

ACASTE

(*Qui s'était levé, se rassied sur le siège & en faisant une pirouette sur lui-même*)

De grâces et d'attraits je vois qu'elle est pourvue;
Mais les défauts qu'elle a ne frappent point ma vue.

ALCESTE

Ils frappent tous la mienne; et, loin de m'en cacher,
Elle sait que j'ai soin de les lui reprocher,
Plus on aime quelqu'un, moins il faut qu'on le flatte;
A ne rien pardonner le pur amour éclate;
Et je bannirais, moi tous ces lâches amants
Que je verrais soumis à tous mes sentiments,
Et dont, à tout propos, les molles complaisances
Donneraient de l'encens à mes extravagances.

CÉLIMÈNE

Enfin, s'il faut qu'à vous s'en rapportent les cœurs,
On doit, pour bien aimer, renoncer aux douceurs
Et du parfait amour mettre l'honneur suprême
A bien injurier les personnes qu'on aime.

ÉLIANTE

L'amour, pour l'ordinaire, est peu fait à ces lois,
Et l'on voit les amants vanter toujours leur choix.
Jamais leur passion n'y voit rien de blâmable,
Et dans l'objet aimé tout leur devient aimable,

Ils comptent les défauts pour des perfections,
Et savent y donner de favorables noms.
La pâle est au jasmin en blancheur comparable;
La noire à faire peur, une brune adorable;
La maigre a de la taille et de la liberté;
La grasse est, dans son port, pleine de majesté;
La malpropre sur soi, de peu d'attraits chargée,
Est mise sous le nom de beauté négligée;
La géante paraît une déesse aux yeux;
La naine, un abrégé des merveilles des cieux;
L'orgueilleuse a le cœur digne d'une couronne;
La fourbe a de l'esprit; la sotte est toute bonne;
La trop grande parleuse est d'agréable humeur;
Et la muette garde une honnête pudeur.
C'est ainsi qu'un amant, dont l'ardeur est extrême
Aime jusqu'aux défauts des personnes qu'il aime.

ALCESTE (*se levant*)

Et moi, je soutiens, moi . . .

CÉLIMÈNE

Brisons là ce discours,
(*Tous se lèvent.*)
Et dans la galerie allons faire deux tours.
(*Clitandre remonte au fond, à droite. Acaste remonte par la droite également, rejoignant Clitandre.*)
Quoi ! vous vous en allez, messieurs ?

CLITANDRE *et* ACASTE

(*Au fond, à droite*)
Non pas, madame.
(*Deux domestiques entrent par la porte C et rangent les meubles comme ils étaient, puis sortent.*)

ALCESTE

La peur de leur départ occupe fort votre âme.
Sortez quand vous voudrez, messieurs; mais j'avertis
Que je ne sors qu'après que vous serez sortis.

ACASTE

(*Passant devant Clitandre et allant à Célimène*)

A moins de voir madame en être importunée,
Rien ne m'appelle ailleurs de toute la journée.

CLITANDRE

Moi, pourvu que je puisse être au petit couché,
Je n'ai point d'autre affaire où je sois attaché.
(*Acaste remonte à Clitandre.*)

CÉLIMÈNE (*à Alceste*)

C'est pour rire, je crois.

ALCESTE

Non, en aucune sorte.
Nous verrons si c'est moi que vous voudrez qui sorte

SCENE VI

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ACASTE, PHILINTE, CLITANDRE, BASQUE

(*Basque entre de gauche, porte A, et vient au-dessus du siège 2*)

BASQUE (*à Alceste*)

Monsieur, un homme est là qui voudrait vous parler
Pour affaire, dit-il, qu'on ne peut reculer.

ALCESTE

Dis-lui que je n'ai point d'affaires si pressées

BASQUE (*remontant*)

Il porte une jaquette à grand'basques plissées,
Avec du d'or dessus

CÉLIMÈNE (*à Alceste*)

Allez voir ce que c'est,
Ou bien faites-le entrer.

(*Philinte remonte à droite et fait le tour des personnages.*)

SCENE VII

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ACASTE, PHILINTE, CLITANDRE, UN GARDE DE LA MARÉCHAUSSÉE

(*Basque fait signe à gauche. Le garde entre porte A et vient au siège 3. Basque sort A.*)

ALCESTE

Qu'est-ce donc qu'il vous plaît?
Venez, monsieur.

LE GARDE

Monsieur, j'ai deux mots à vous dire.

ALCESTE

Vous pouvez parler haut, monsieur, pour m'en instruire.

LE GARDE

Messieurs les maréchaux, dont j'ai commandement,
Vous mandent de venir les trouver promptement,
Monsieur.

ALCESTE

Qui? moi, monsieur?

LE GARDE

Vous-même.

ALCESTE

Et pour quoi faire?

PHILINTE

(*Qui est passé derrière le garde et les meubles, descend. Le garde remonte porte A*)
C'est d'Oronte et de vous la ridicule affaire.

CÉLIMÈNE (*à Philinte*)

Comment?

PHILINTE

Oronte et lui se sont tantôt bravés
Sur certains petits vers, qu'il n'a pas approuvés;
Et l'on veut assoupir la chose en sa naissance.

ALCESTE

Moi, je n'aurai jamais de lâche complaisance.

PHILINTE

Mais il faut suivre l'ordre: allons, disposez-vous.
(*Philinte remonte à la hauteur du siège 3.*)

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ALCESTE

Quel accommodement veut-on faire entre nous?
La voix de ces messieurs me condamnera-t-elle
A trouver bons les vers qui font notre querelle?
Je ne me dédis point de ce que j'en ai dit,
Je les trouve méchants.

PHILINTE

Mais d'un plus doux esprit . . .

ALCESTE

Je n'en démordrai point, les vers sont exécrables.

PHILINTE

Vous devez faire voir des sentiments traitables.
Allons, venez.

ALCESTE

J'irai; mais rien n'aura pouvoir
De me faire dédire.

PHILINTE

Allons vous faire voir.

(*Il fait un mouvement pour sortir à gauche, au-dessus des meubles.*)

ALCESTE

Hors qu'un commandement exprès du roi me vienne
De trouver bons les vers dont on se met en peine,
Je soutiendrai toujours, morbleu! qu'ils sont mauvais,
Et qu'un homme est pendable après les avoir faits.

(*Philinte et Alceste se dirigent vers la porte A. Rires des marquis. Alceste s'arrête. A Clitandre et Acaste qui rient.*)

Par la sangbleu ! messieurs, je ne croyais pas être
Si plaisant que je suis.

CÉLIMÈNE

Allez vite paraître

Où vous devez.

(*Célimène se retourne vers Alceste*)

ALCESTE

J'y vais, madame; et sur mes pas
Je reviens en ce lieu pour vider nos débats.

(*Philinte, Alceste, le garde sortent porte A, pendant que Célimène remonte. Acaste offre la main gauche à Célimène. Clitandre la main gauche à Eliante. Tous sortent au fond, pendant que le rideau baisse.*)

FIN DU DEUXIÈME ACTE

"6-19-34"

ACTE TROISIEME

Au lever du rideau, la scène est vide. La porte du fond s'ouvre, Clitandre et Acaste entrent du fond à droite, Clitandre le premier. Ils descendent au milieu.

SCENE PREMIERE

CLITANDRE, ACASTE

CLITANDRE

Cher marquis, je te vois l'âme bien satisfaite;
Toute chose t'égaie, et rien ne t'inquiète.
En bonne foi, crois-tu, sans t'éblouir les yeux,
Avoir de grands sujets de paraître joyeux?

ACASTE

Parbleu! je ne vois pas, lorsque je m'examine,
Où prendre aucun sujet d'avoir l'âme chagrine.
J'ai du bien, je suis jeune, et sors d'une maison
Qui se peut dire noble avec quelque raison;
Et je crois, par le rang que me donne ma race,
Qu'il est fort peu d'emplois dont je ne sois en passe.
Pour le cœur, dont surtout nous devons faire cas,
On sait, sans vanité, que je n'en manque pas;
Et l'on m'a vu pousser, dans le monde, une affaire
D'une assez vigoureuse et gaillarde manière.
Pour de l'esprit, j'en ai, sans doute, et du bon goût
A juger sans étude et raisonner de tout,
A faire, aux nouveautés, dont je suis idolâtre,

Figure de savant sur les bancs du théâtre,
Y décider en chef, et faire du fracas
A tous les beaux endroits qui méritent des *has!*
Je suis assez adroit; j'ai bon air, bonne mine,
Les dents belles surtout, et la taille fort fine.
(*Acaste fait une pirouette sur lui-même et se trouve à la même place.*)
Quant à se mettre bien, je crois, sans me flatter,
Qu'on serait mal venu de me le disputer.
Je me vois dans l'estime autant qu'on y puisse être,
Fort aimé du beau sexe, et bien auprès du maître.
Je crois qu'avec cela, mon cher marquis, je croi
Qu'on peut, par tout pays, être content de soi.
(*Il passe à droite.*)

CLITANDRE

(*Allant à gauche*)

Oui. Mais, trouvant ailleurs des conquêtes faciles,
Pourquoi pousser ici des soupirs inutiles?

ACASTE

(*Revenant au milieu, où Clitandre le rejoint*)

Moi? Parbleu! je ne suis de taille ni d'humeur
A pouvoir d'une belle essuyer la froideur.
C'est aux gens mal tournés, aux mérites vulgaires,
A brûler constamment pour des beautés sévères,
A languir à leurs pieds et souffrir leurs rigueurs,
A chercher le secours des soupirs et des pleurs,
Et tâcher, par des soins d'une très-longue suite,
D'obtenir ce qu'on nie à leur peu de mérite.
Mais les gens de mon air, marquis, ne sont pas faits
Pour aimer à crédit, et faire tous les frais.

Quelque rare que soit le mérite des belles,
Je pense, Dieu merci, qu'on vaut son prix comme elles;
Que, pour se faire honneur d'un cœur comme le mien,
Ce n'est pas la raison qu'il ne leur coûte rien;
Et qu'au moins, à tout mettre en de justes balances,
Il faut qu'à frais communs se fassent les avances.

CLITANDRE

Tu penses donc, marquis, être fort bien ici?

ACASTE

J'ai quelque lieu, marquis, de le penser ainsi.

CLITANDRE

Crois-moi, détache-toi de cette erreur extrême:
Tu te flattes mon cher, et t'aveugles toi-même.

ACASTE

Il est vrai, je me flatte, et m'aveugle en effet.

CLITANDRE

Mais qui te fait juger ton bonheur si parfait?

ACASTE

Je me flatte.

CLITANDRE

Sur quoi fonder tes conjectures?

ACASTE

Je m'aveugle.

CLITANDRE

En as-tu des preuves qui soient sûres?

ACASTE

Je m'abuse, te dis-je.

CLITANDRE

Est-ce que de ses vœux
Célimène t'a fait quelques secrets aveux?

ACASTE

Non, je suis maltraité.

CLITANDRE

Réponds-moi, je te prie.

ACASTE

Je n'ai que des rebuts.

CLITANDRE

Laissons la raillerie,
Et me dis quel espoir on peut t'avoir donné.

ACASTE

Je suis le misérable, et toi le fortuné:
On a pour ma personne une aversion grande,
Et quelqu'un de ces jours il faut que je me pende.
(*Il passe à droite.*)

CLITANDRE (*à gauche*)

O! çà, veux-tu, marquis, pour ajuster nos vœux,
Que nous tombions d'accord d'une chose tous deux?
(*Il revient au milieu.*)
Que, qui pourra montrer une marque certaine
D'avoir meilleure part au cœur de Célimène,
L'autre ici fera place au vainqueur prétendu,
Et le délivrera d'un rival assidu?

ACASTE

(*Allant à Clitandre*)

Ah ! parbleu ! tu me plais avec un tel langage,
Et, du bon de mon cœur, à cela je m'engage.

(*Un valet ouvre la porte du fond et reste en dehors.*)

Mais, chut !

(*Ils remontent au fond.*)

SCENE II

CÉLIMÈNE, ACASTE, CLITANDRE

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Entrant du fond à droite et venant au milieu*)

Encore ici ?

CLITANDRE

L'amour retient nos pas.

CÉLIMÈNE

Je viens d'ouïr entrer un carrosse là-bas.
Savez-vous qui c'est ?

CLITANDRE

Non.

SCENE III

CÉLIMÈNE, ACASTE, CLITANDRE, BASQUE

(*Basque entre de droite par C et reste au-dessus des meubles 4, 5, et 6*)

BASQUE

Arsinoé, madame,
Monte ici pour vous voir.

CÉLIMÈNE

Que me veut cette femme?

BASQUE

Eliante là-bas est à l'entretenir.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Descend au milieu. Les deux marquis descendent avec elle*)
De quoi s'avise-t-elle, et qui la fait venir?
(*Basque sort à droite, porte C.*)

ACASTE

Pour prude consommée en tous lieux elle passe,
Et l'ardeur de son zèle . . .

CÉLIMÈNE

Oui, oui, franche grimace.
Dans l'âme elle est du monde; et ses soins tentent tout
Pour accrocher quelqu'un, sans en venir à bout.
Elle ne saurait voir qu'avec un œil d'envie
Les amants déclarés dont une autre est suivie;
Et son triste mérite, abandonné de tous,
Contre le siècle aveugle est toujours en courroux.
Elle tâche à couvrir d'un faux voile de prude
Ce que chez elle on voit d'affreuse solitude;
Et, pour sauver l'honneur de ses faibles appas,
Elle attache du crime au pouvoir qu'ils n'ont pas.
Cependant un amant plairait fort à la dame,
Et même pour Alceste elle a tendresse d'âme.
Ce qu'il me rend de soins outrage ses attraits;

Elle veut que ce soit un vol que je lui fais;
(*Acaste en riant gagne devant les meubles 4, 5, 6. Célimène parle à Clitandre.*)
Et son jaloux dépit, qu'avec peine elle cache,
En tous endroits sous main contre moi se détache.
Enfin je n'ai rien vu de si sot à mon gré;
Elle est impertinente au suprême degré,
Et . . .
(*Célimène se retourne pour parler à Acaste; elle aperçoit Arsinoé, qui vient d'entrer par la droite, porte C, et se trouve au-dessus du siège 4. Célimène remonte à elle.*)

SCENE IV

ARSINOÉ, CÉLIMÈNE, CLITANDRE, BASQUE

CÉLIMÈNE

Ha! quel heureux sort en ce lieu vous amène?
Madame, sans mentir, j'étais de vous en peine.

ARSINOÉ

Je viens pour quelque avis que j'ai cru vous devoir.

CÉLIMÈNE

Ah! mon Dieu! que je suis contente de vous voir!
(*Clitandre et Acaste saluent les dames et remontent au fond à droite. Clitandre passe au-dessus des dames. Ils sortent en riant.*)

SCENE V

ARSINOÉ, CÉLIMÈNE

ARSINOÉ

(*Descendant au milieu*)

Leur départ ne pouvait plus à propos se faire.

CÉLIMÈNE

Voulons-nous nous asseoir ?

ARSINOÉ

Il n'est pas nécessaire.

Madame, l'amitié doit surtout éclater
Aux choses qui le plus nous peuvent importer;
Et, comme il n'en est point de plus grande importance
Que celles de l'honneur et de la bienséance,
Je viens, par un avis qui touche votre honneur,
Témoigner l'amitié que pour vous a mon cœur.
Hier j'étais chez des gens de vertu singulière,
Où sur vous du discours on tourna la matière;
Et là, votre conduite, avec ses grands éclats,
Madame, eut le malheur qu'on ne la loua pas.
Cette foule de gens dont vous souffrez visite,
Votre galanterie, et les bruits qu'elle excite,
Trouvèrent des censeurs plus qu'il n'aurait fallu,
Et bien plus rigoureux que je n'eusse voulu.
Vous pouvez bien penser quel parti je sus prendre;
Je fis ce que je pus pour vous pouvoir défendre;
Je vous excusai fort sur votre intention,
Et voulus de votre âme être la caution.

Mais vous savez qu'il est des choses dans la vie
Qu'on ne peut excuser, quoiqu'on en ait envie;
Et je me vis contrainte à demeurer d'accord
Que l'air dont vous vivez vous faisait un peu tort;
Qu'il prenait dans le monde une méchante face;
Qu'il n'est conte fâcheux que partout on n'en fasse;
Et que, si vous vouliez, tous vos déportements
Pourraient moins donner prise aux mauvais jugements.
Non que j'y croie au fond l'honnêteté blessée;
Me préserve le ciel d'en avoir la pensée!
Mais aux ombres du crime on prête aisément foi,
Et ce n'est pas assez de bien vivre pour soi.
Madame, je vous crois l'âme trop raisonnable
Pour ne pas prendre bien cet avis profitable,
Et pour l'attribuer qu'aux mouvements secrets
D'un zèle qui m'attache à tous vos intérêts.

(*Arsinoé fait une révérence à Célimène et descend d'un pas à droite. Célimène prend bien le milieu de la scène.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Madame, j'ai beaucoup de grâces à vous rendre;
Un tel avis m'oblige; et, loin de le mal prendre,
J'en prétends reconnaître à l'instant la faveur,
Par un avis aussi qui touche votre honneur;
Et comme je vous vois vous montrer mon amie,
En m'apprenant les bruits que de moi l'on publie,
Je veux suivre, à mon tour, un exemple si doux,
En vous avertissant de ce qu'on dit de vous.
En un lieu, l'autre jour, où je faisais visite,
Je trouvai quelques gens d'un très-rare mérite,
Qui, parlant des vrais soins d'une âme qui vit bien,
Firent tomber sur vous, madame, l'entretien.

Là, votre pruderie et vos éclats de zèle
Ne furent pas cités comme un fort bon modèle:
Cette affection d'un grave extérieur,
Vos discours éternels de sagesse et d'honneur,
Vos mines et vos cris aux ombres d'indécence
Que d'un mot ambigu peut avoir l'innocence,
Cette hauteur d'estime où vous êtes de vous,
Et ces yeux de pitié que vous jetez sur tous,
Vos fréquentes leçons et vos aigres censures
Sur des choses qui sont innocentes et pures;
Tout cela, si je puis vous parler franchement,
Madame, fut blâmé d'un commun sentiment.
A quoi bon, disaient-ils, cette mine modeste,
Et ce sage dehors que dément tout le reste?
Elle est à bien prier exacte au dernier point;
Mais elle bat ses gens, et ne les paye point.
Dans tous les lieux dévots elle étale un grand zèle;
Mais elle met du blanc, et veut paraître belle.
Elle fait des tableaux couvrir les nudités,
Mais elle a de l'amour pour les réalités.
Pour moi, contre chacun, je pris votre défense,
Et leur assurai fort que c'était médisance:
Mais tous les sentiments combattirent le mien,
Et leur conclusion fut que vous feriez bien
De prendre moins de soin des actions des autres,
Et de vous mettre un peu plus en peine des vôtres;
Qu'on doit se regarder soi-même un fort long temps,
Avant que de songer à condamner les gens;
Qu'il faut mettre le poids d'une vie exemplaire
Dans les corrections qu'aux autres on veut faire;
Et qu'encor vaut-il mieux s'en remettre, au besoin,
A ceux à qui le ciel en a commis le soin.

Madame, je vous crois aussi trop raisonnable
Pour ne pas prendre bien cet avis profitable,
Et pour l'attribuer qu'aux mouvements secrets
D'un zèle qui m'attache à tous vos intérêts.

(*Célimène fait une révérence à Arsinoé et descend un peu à gauche.*)

ARSINOÉ

(*Venant un peu vers le milieu*)

A quoi qu'en reprenant on soit assujettie,
Je ne m'attendais pas à cette repartie,
Madame; et je vois bien, par ce qu'elle a d'aigreur,
Que mon sincère avis vous a blessée au cœur.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Célimène va à Arsinoé en remontant*)

Au contraire, madame; et, si l'on était sage,
Ces avis mutuels seraient mis en usage.
On détruirait par là, traitant de bonne foi,
Ce grand aveuglement où chacun est pour soi.
Il ne tiendra qu'à vous qu'avec le même zèle
Nous ne continuions cet office fidèle,
Et ne prenions grand soin de nous dire entre nous
Ce que nous entendrons, vous de moi, moi de vous.

ARSINOÉ

Ah! madame, de vous je ne puis rien entendre;
C'est en moi que l'on peut trouver fort à reprendre.

CÉLIMÈNE

Madame, on peut, je crois, louer et blâmer tout;
Et chacun a raison, suivant l'âge ou le goût.

Il est une saison pour la galanterie,
Il en est une aussi propre à la pruderie.
On peut, par politique, en prendre le parti,
Quand de nos jeunes ans l'éclat est amorti.
Cela sert à couvrir de fâcheuses disgrâces.
Je ne dis pas qu'un jour je ne suive vos traces;
L'âge amènera tout; et ce n'est pas le temps,
Madame, comme on sait, d'être prude à vingt ans.

(*Célimène va à gauche en s'éventant. Arsinoé est au milieu.*)

ARSINOÉ

Certes, vous vous targuez d'un bien faible avantage,
Et vous faites sonner terriblement votre âge.
Ce que de plus que vous on en pourrait avoir,
N'est pas un si grand cas pour s'en tant prévaloir;
Et je ne sais pourquoi votre âme ainsi s'emporte,
Madame, à me pousser de cette étrange sorte.

(*Arsinoé descend un peu à droite. Célimène en avant des sièges 1, 2, 3.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Et moi, je ne sais pas, madame, aussi pourquoi
On vous voit en tous lieux vous déchaîner sur moi.

(*Célimène revient un peu au milieu.*)

Faut-il de vos chagrins sans cesse à moi vous prendre?
Et puis-je mais des soins qu'on ne va pas vous rendre?
Si ma personne aux gens inspire de l'amour,
Et si l'on continue à m'offrir chaque jour
Des vœux que votre cœur peut souhaiter qu'on m'ôte,
Je n'y saurais que faire, et ce n'est pas ma faute;
Vous avez le champ libre, et je n'empêche pas
Que, pour les attirer, vous n'ayez des appas.

ARSINOÉ

(*Venant à Célimène, qui est au milieu*)

Hélas! et croyez-vous que l'on se mette en peine
De ce nombre d'amants dont vous faites la vaine,
Et qu'il ne nous soit pas fort aisé de juger
A quel prix aujourd'hui l'on peut les engager?
Pensez-vous faire croire, à voir comme tout roule,
Que votre seul mérite attire cette foule?
Qu'ils ne brûlent pour vous que d'un honnête amour
Et que pour vos vertus ils vous font tous la cour?
On ne s'aveugle point par de vaines défaites;
Le monde n'est point dupe; et j'en vois qui sont faites
A pouvoir inspirer de tendres sentiments,
Qui chez elles pourtant ne fixent point d'amants:
Et de là nous pouvons tirer des conséquences,
Qu'on n'acquiert point leurs cœurs sans de grandes avances;
Qu'aucun pour nos beaux yeux n'est notre soupirant,
Et qu'il faut acheter tous les soins qu'on nous rend.
Ne vous enflez donc pas d'une si grande gloire,
Pour les petits brillants d'une faible victoire;
Et corrigez un peu l'orgueil de vos appas,
De traiter pour cela les gens de haut en bas.
Si nos yeux enviaient les conquêtes des vôtres,
Je pense qu'on pourrait faire comme les autres,
Ne se point ménager, et vous faire bien voir
Que l'on a des amants quand on en veut avoir.

(*Arsinoé gagne à droite. Célimène au milieu. Un petit temps.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Ayez-en donc, madame, et voyons cette affaire;
Par ce rare secret efforcez-vous de plaire;
Et sans . . .

ARSINOÉ

Brisons, madame, un pareil entretien;
Il pousserait trop loin votre esprit et le mien;
(*Arsinoé vient auprès de Célimène.*)
Et j'aurais pris déjà le congé qu'il faut prendre,
Si mon carrosse encor ne m'obligeait d'attendre.

CÉLIMÈNE

Autant qu'il vous plaira vous pouvez arrêter,
Madame, et là-dessus rien ne doit vous hâter.
(*Alceste entre par la porte A et vient au-dessus du siège 3.*)
Mais, sans vous fatiguer de ma cérémonie,
Je m'en vais vous donner meilleure compagnie;
Et monsieur, qu'à propos le hasard fait venir,
Remplira mieux ma place à vous entretenir.

SCENE VI

ALCESTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ARSINOÉ

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Célimène remonte d'un pas vers Alceste*)
Alceste, il faut que j'aille écrire un mot de lettre.
Que, sans me faire tort, je ne saurais remettre.
Soyez avec madame; elle aura la bonté
D'excuser aisément mon incivilité.
(*Célimène salue Arsinoé; elle se retourne vers Alceste, qui lui offre la main droite et la reconduit à la porte par où elle sort, en tournant à gauche. Arsinoé remonte un peu au milieu.*)

SCENE VII

ALCESTE, ARSINOÉ

ARSINOÉ

(*Arsinoé redescend avec Alceste, qui a reconduit Célimène*)

Vous voyez, elle veut que je vous entretienne,
Attendant un moment que mon carrosse vienne;
Et jamais tous ses soins ne pouvaient m'offrir rien
Qui me fût plus charmant qu'un pareil entretien.
En vérité, les gens d'un mérite sublime
Entraînent de chacun et l'amour et l'estime;
Et le vôtre sans doute a des charmes secrets
Qui font entrer mon cœur dans tous vos intérêts.
Je voudrais que la cour, par un regard propice,
A ce que vous valez rendît plus de justice.
Vous avez à vous plaindre; et je suis en courroux,
Quand je vois chaque jour qu'on ne fait rien pour vous.

ALCESTE

(*Au milieu. Arsinoé près de lui.*)

Moi, madame? Et sur quoi pourrais-je en rien prétendre?
Quel service à l'Etat est-ce qu'on m'a vu rendre?
Qu'ai-je fait, s'il vous plaît, de si brillant de soi,
Pour me plaindre à la cour qu'on ne fait rien pour moi?

ARSINOÉ

Tous ceux sur qui la cour jette des yeux propices
N'ont pas toujours rendu de ces fameux services.
Il faut l'occasion ainsi que le pouvoir;
Et le mérite enfin que vous nous faites voir
Devrait . . .

ALCESTE

Mon Dieu ! laissons mon mérite, de grâce;
De quoi voulez-vous là que la cour s'embarrasse?
Elle aurait fort à faire, et ses soins seraient grands
D'avoir à déterrer le mérite des gens.

ARSINOÉ

Un mérite éclatant se déterre lui-même;
Du vôtre en bien des lieux on fait un cas extrême;
Et vous saurez de moi qu'en deux fort bons endroits
Vous fûtes hier loué par des gens d'un grand poids.

ALCESTE

Hé ! madame, l'on loue aujourd'hui tout le monde,
Et le siècle par là n'a rien qu'on ne confonde.
Tout est d'un grand mérite également doué;
Ce n'est plus un honneur que de se voir loué;
D'éloges on regorge, à la tête on les jette,
Et mon valet de chambre est mis dans la gazette.

ARSINOÉ

Pour moi, je voudrais bien que, pour vous montrer mieux,
Une charge à la cour vous pût frapper les yeux.
Pour peu que d'y songer vous nous fassiez les mines,
On peut, pour vous servir, remuer des machines;
Et j'ai des gens en main que j'emploierai pour vous,
Qui vous feront à tout un chemin assez doux.

ALCESTE

Et que voudriez-vous, madame, que j'y fisse?
L'humeur dont je me sens veut que je m'en bannisse;

Le ciel ne m'a point fait, en me donnant le jour,
Une âme compatible avec l'air de la cour.
Je ne me trouve point les vertus nécessaires
Pour y bien réussir, et faire mes affaires.
Etre franc et sincère est mon plus grand talent;
Je ne sais point jouer les hommes en parlant;
Et qui n'a pas le don de cacher ce qu'il pense,
Doit faire en ce pays fort peu de résidence.
Hors de la cour sans doute on n'a pas cet appui,
Et ces titres d'honneur qu'elle donne aujourd'hui;
Mais on n'a pas aussi, perdant ces avantages,
Le chagrin de jouer de fort sots personnages;
On n'a point à souffrir mille rebuts cruels;
On n'a point à louer les vers de messieurs tels,
A donner de l'encens à madame une telle,
Et de nos francs marquis essuyer la cervelle.
(*Il descend un peu à gauche. Arsinoé est au milieu.*)

ARSINOÉ

Laissons, puisqu'il vous plaît ce chapitre de cour;
Mais il faut que mon cœur vous plaigne en votre amour;
Et, pour vous découvrir là-dessus mes pensées,
Je souhaiterais fort vos ardeurs mieux placées.
Vous méritez sans doute un sort beaucoup plus doux,
Et celle qui vous charme et indigne de vous.

ALCESTE

(*Revenant près d'Arsinoé*)

Mais en disant cela, songez-vous, je vous prie,
Que cette personne est, madame, votre amie?

ARSINOÉ

Oui. Mais ma conscience est blessée en effet
De souffrir plus longtemps le tort que l'on vous fait
L'état où je vous vois afflige trop mon âme,
Et je vous donne avis qu'on trahit votre flamme.

ALCESTE

C'est me montrer, madame, un tendre mouvement,
Et de pareils avis obligent un amant.

ARSINOÉ

Oui, toute mon amie, elle est, et je la nomme,
Indigne d'asservir le cœur d'un galant homme;
Et le sien n'a pour vous que de feintes douceurs.

ALCESTE

Cela se peut, madame, on ne voit pas les cœurs;
Mais votre charité se serait bien passée
De jeter dans le mien une telle pensée.

ARSINOÉ

Si vous ne voulez pas être désabusé,
Il faut ne vous rien dire; il est assez aisé.
(*Elle fait deux pas à gauche.*)

ALCESTE

Non. Mais sur ce sujet, quoi que l'on nous expose,
Les doutes sont fâcheux plus que toute autre chose;
Et je voudrais, pour moi, qu'on ne me fît savoir
Que ce qu'avec clarté l'on peut me faire voir.

ARSINOÉ

Eh bien, c'est assez dit; et sur cette matière
Vous allez recevoir une pleine lumière.
Oui, je veux que de tout vos yeux vous fassent foi.
(*Elle va à Alceste, qui recule de deux pas à gauche.*)
Donnez-moi seulement la main jusque chez moi;
Là je vous ferai voir une preuve fidèle
De l'infidélité du cœur de votre belle;
Et, si pour d'autres yeux le vôtre peut brûler,
(*Alceste lui tend la main gauche.*)
On pourra vous offrir de quoi vous consoler.
(*Ils sortent tous deux par la porte C, en passant au-dessus des sièges 4, 5 et 6, pendant que le rideau baisse.*)

FIN DU TROISIÈME ACTE

"6-21-34"

ACTE QUATRIEME

Pendant l'entr'acte, on écarte les sièges de l'avant-scène les uns des autres. Au lever du rideau, Philinte et Eliante entrent du fond à droite. Ils restent au-dessus, au milieu.

SCENE PREMIERE

ELIANTE, PHILINTE

PHILINTE

Non, l'on n'a point vu d'âme à manier si dure,
Ni d'accommodement plus pénible à conclure;
En vain de tous côtés on l'a voulu tourner,
Hors de son sentiment on n'a pu l'entraîner;
Et jamais différend si bizarre, je pense,
N'avait de ces messieurs occupé la prudence.
« Non, messieurs, disait-il, je ne me dédis point,
Et tomberai d'accord de tout, hors de ce point.
De quoi s'offense-t-il? et que veut-il me dire?
Y va-t-il de sa gloire à ne pas bien écrire?
Que lui fait mon avis qu'il a pris de travers?
On peut être honnête homme, et faire mal des vers;
Ce n'est point à l'honneur que touchent ces matières;
Je le tiens galant homme en toutes les manières,
Homme de qualité, de mérite, et de cœur,
Tout ce qu'il vous plaira, mais fort méchant auteur.
Je louerai, si l'on veut, son train et sa dépense,
Son adresse à cheval, aux armes, à la danse;

Mais, pour louer ses vers, je suis son serviteur;
Et, lorsque d'en mieux faire on n'a pas le bonheur,
On ne doit de rimer avoir aucune envie,
Qu'on n'y soit condamné sur peine de la vie. »
Enfin toute la grâce et l'accommodement
Où s'est avec effort plié son sentiment,
C'est de dire, croyant adoucir bien son style:
« Monsieur, je suis fâché d'être si difficile;
Et, pour l'amour de vous, je voudrais de bon cœur
Avoir trouvé tantôt votre sonnet meilleur. »
Et dans une embrassade on leur a, pour conclure,
Fait vite envelopper toute la procédure.

ÉLIANTE

(*Descend tout à fait au milieu. Philinte descend avec elle*)

Dans ses façons d'agir il est fort singulier;
Mais j'en fais, je l'avoue, un cas particulier;
Et la sincérité dont son âme se pique
A quelque chose en soi de noble et d'héroïque.
C'est une vertu rare au siècle d'aujourd'hui,
Et je la voudrais voir partout comme chez lui.

PHILINTE

Pour moi, plus je le vois, plus surtout je m'étonne
De cette passion où son cœur s'abandonne.
(*Eliante va devant le siège 5. Philinte est au milieu.*)
De l'humeur dont le ciel a voulu le former,
Je ne sais pas comment il s'avise d'aimer;
Et je sais moins encor comment votre cousine
Peut être la personne où son penchant l'incline.

ÉLIANTE

Cela fait assez voir que l'amour, dans les cœurs,
N'est pas toujours produit par un rapport d'humeurs;
Et toutes ces raisons de douces sympathies
Dans cet exemple-ci se trouvent démenties.

PHILINTE

Mais croyez-vous qu'on l'aime, aux choses qu'on peut voir?

ÉLIANTE

C'est un point qu'il n'est pas fort aisé de savoir:
Comment pouvoir juger s'il est vrai qu'elle l'aime?
Son cœur de ce qu'il sent n'est pas bien sûr lui-même;
Il aime quelquefois sans qu'il le sache bien,
Et croit aimer aussi, parfois, qu'il n'en est rien.

PHILINTE

Je crois que notre ami, près de cette cousine,
Trouvera des chagrins plus qu'il ne s'imagine;
Et, s'il avait mon cœur, à dire vérité,
Il tournerait ses vœux tout d'un autre côté;
Et par un choix plus juste, on le verrait, madame,
Profiter des bontés que lui montre votre âme.

ÉLIANTE (*allant à Philinte*)

Pour moi, je n'en fais point de façons, et je croi
Qu'on doit, sur de tels points, être de bonne foi.
Je ne m'oppose point à toute sa tendresse;
Au contraire, mon cœur pour elle s'intéresse;
Et, si c'était qu'à moi la chose pût tenir,
Moi-même à ce qu'il aime on me verrait l'unir.

Mais si, dans un tel choix, comme tout se peut faire,
Son amour éprouvait quelque destin contraire,
S'il fallait que d'un autre on couronnât les feux,
Je pourrais me résoudre à recevoir ses vœux;
Et le refus souffert en pareille occurrence
Ne m'y ferait trouver aucune répugnance.

PHILINTE

Et moi, de mon côté, je ne m'oppose pas,
Madame, à ces bontés qu'ont pour lui vos appas;
Et lui-même, s'il veut, il peut bien vous instruire
De ce que là-dessus j'ai pris soin de lui dire.
(*Mouvement d'Eliante.*)
Mais si, par un hymen qui les joindrait eux deux,
Vous étiez hors d'état de recevoir ses vœux,
Tous les miens tenteraient la faveur éclatante
Qu'avec tant de bonté votre âme lui présente;
Heureux si, quand son cœur s'y pourra dérober,
Elle pouvait sur moi, madame, retomber!

ÉLIANTE (*au milieu*)

Vous vous divertissez, Philinte.

PHILINTE

Non, madame,
Et je vous parle ici du meilleur de mon âme.
J'attends l'occasion de m'offrir hautement,
Et de tous mes souhaits j'en presse le moment.
(*Alceste entre vivement par la porte C et va à Eliante, qui est au milieu et se retourne vers lui. Philinte descend à gauche.*)

SCENE II

ALCESTE, ÉLIANTE, PHILINTE

ALCESTE

Ah ! faites-moi raison, madame, d'une offense
Qui vient de triompher de toute ma constance.

ÉLIANTE

Qu'est-ce donc ? Qu'avez-vous qui vous puisse émouvoir !

ALCESTE

J'ai ce que, sans mourir, je ne puis concevoir;
Et le déchaînement de toute la nature
Ne m'accablerait pas comme cette aventure.
C'en est fait. . . . Mon amour . . . Je ne saurais parler.

ÉLIANTE

Que votre esprit un peu tâche à se rappeler.

ALCESTE

O juste ciel ! Faut-il qu'on joigne à tant de grâces
Les vices odieux des âmes les plus basses !

ÉLIANTE

Mais encor, qui vous peut . . .

ALCESTE

Ah ! tout est ruiné !
Je suis . . . je suis trahi, je suis assassiné !
Célimène . . . Eût-on pu croire cette nouvelle ?
Célimène me trompe, et n'est qu'une infidèle.

ÉLIANTE

(*Descendant de deux pas au milieu*)

Avez-vous pour le croire un juste fondement?

PHILINTE

(*Faisant un pas vers le milieu*)

Peut-être est-ce un soupçon conçu légèrement;
Et votre esprit jaloux prend parfois des chimères . . .

ALCESTE

(*Descendant auprès d'Eliante*)

Ah! morbleu! mêlez-vous, monsieur, de vos affaires.
(*A Eliante:*)
C'est de sa trahison n'être que trop certain,
Que l'avoir dans ma poche, écrite de sa main.
Oui, madame, une lettre écrite pour Oronte,
A produit à mes yeux ma disgrâce et sa honte;
Oronte, dont j'ai cru qu'elle fuyait les soins,
Et que de mes rivaux je redoutais le moins.

PHILINTE

Une lettre peut bien tromper par l'apparence,
Et n'est pas quelquefois si coupable qu'on pense.

ALCESTE

Monsieur, encore un coup, laissez-moi, s'il vous plaît,
Et ne prenez souci que de votre intérêt.

ÉLIANTE

Vous devez modérer vos transports, et l'outrage . . .

ALCESTE

Madame, c'est à vous qu'appartient cet ouvrage;
C'est à vous que mon cœur a recours aujourd'hui,
Pour pouvoir s'affranchir de son cuisant ennui
Vengez-moi d'une ingrate et perfide parente,
Qui trahit lâchement une ardeur si constante;
Vengez-moi de ce trait qui doit vous faire horreur

ÉLIANTE

Moi, vous venger? Comment?

ALCESTE

En recevant mon cœur.
Acceptez-le, madame, au lieu de l'infidèle:
C'est par là que je puis prendre vengeance d'elle;
Et je la veux punir par les sincères vœux,
Par le profond amour, les soins respectueux,
Les devoirs empressés et l'assidu service
Dont ce cœur va vous faire un ardent sacrifice.

ÉLIANTE

Je compatis, sans doute, à ce que vous souffrez,
Et ne méprise point le cœur que vous m'offrez;
Mais peut-être le mal n'est pas si grand qu'on pense,
Et vous pourrez quitter ce désir de vengeance.
Lorsque l'injure part d'un objet plein d'appas,
On fait force desseins qu'on n'exécute pas:
On a beau voir, pour rompre, une raison puissante,
Une coupable aimée est bientôt innocente;
Tout le mal qu'on lui veut se dissipe aisément,
Et l'on sait ce que c'est qu'un courroux d'un amant.

ALCESTE

Non, non, madame, non. L'offense est trop mortelle;
Il n'est point de retour, et je romps avec elle;
Rien ne saurait changer le dessein que j'en fais,
Et je me punirais de l'estimer jamais.

(*On ouvre la porte du fond.*)

La voici.

(*Il descend à droite. Eliante va à lui.*)

Mon courroux redouble à cette approche;
Je vais de sa noirceur lui faire un vif reproche,
Pleinement la confondre, et vous porter après
Un cœur tout dégagé de ses trompeurs attraits.

(*Philinte va à Eliante, lui offre la main droite, qu'elle prend. Ils remontent au fond pendant que Célimène entre du fond de droite; elle salue Eliante et Philinte, qui sortent par le fond. Célimène reste un peu au fond. Alceste à droite.*)

SCENE III

CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE

ALCESTE (*à part*)

O ciel! de mes transports puis-je être ici le maître?

CÉLIMÈNE (*à part*)

Ouais!

(*à Alceste:*)

Quel est donc le trouble où je vous vois paraître?
Et que me veulent dire et ces soupirs poussés,
Et ces sombres regards que sur moi vous lancez?

(*Célimène descend au milieu. Alceste remonte à elle.*)

ALCESTE

Que toutes les horreurs dont une âme est capable
A vos déloyautés n'ont rien de comparable;
Que le sort, les démons, et le ciel en courroux,
N'ont jamais rien produit de si méchant que vous.

CÉLIMÈNE

Voilà certainement des douceurs que j'admire.

ALCESTE

Ah! ne plaisantez point, il n'est pas temps de rire.
Rougissez bien plutôt, vous en avez raison,
Et j'ai de sûrs témoins de votre trahison.
Voilà ce que marquaient les troubles de mon âme;
Ce n'était pas en vain que s'alarmait ma flamme.
Par ces fréquents soupçons qu'on trouvait odieux,
Je cherchais le malheur qu'ont rencontré mes yeux;
Et malgré tous vos soins et votre adresse à feindre,
Mon astre me disait ce que j'avais à craindre.
Mais ne présumez pas que, sans être vengé,
Je souffre le dépit de me voir outragé.
Je sais que sur les vœux on n'a point de puissance,
Que l'amour veut partout naître sans dépendance,
Que jamais par la force on n'entra dans un cœur,
Et que toute âme est libre à nommer son vainqueur:
Aussi ne trouverais-je aucun sujet de plainte,
Si pour moi votre bouche avait parlé sans feinte;
Et, rejetant mes vœux dès le premier abord,
Mon cœur n'aurait eu droit de s'en prendre qu'au sort.
Mais d'un aveu trompeur voir ma flamme applaudie,
C'est une trahison, c'est une perfidie,
Qui ne saurait trouver de trop grands châtiments,
Et je puis tout permettre à mes ressentiments.

Oui, oui, redoutez tout après un tel outrage;
Je ne suis plus à moi, je suis tout à la rage.
Percé du coup mortel dont vous m'assassinez,
Mes sens par la raison ne sont plus gouvernés;
Je cède aux mouvements d'une juste colère,
Et je ne réponds pas de ce que je puis faire.

CÉLIMÈNE

D'où vient donc, je vous prie, un tel emportement?
Avez-vous, dites-moi, perdu le jugement?

ALCESTE

Oui, oui, je l'ai perdu, lorsque dans votre vue
J'ai pris, pour mon malheur, le poison qui me tue,
Et que j'ai cru trouver quelque sincérité
Dans les traîtres appas dont je fus enchanté.

CÉLIMÈNE

De quelle trahison pouvez-vous donc vous plaindre?

ALCESTE

Ah! que ce cœur est double, et sait bien l'art de feindre!
Mais, pour le mettre à bout, j'ai des moyens tous prêts.
(*Alceste fouille dans sa poche et montre une lettre.*)
Jetez ici les yeux, et connaissez vos traits:
Ce billet découvert suffit pour vous confondre,
Et contre ce témoin on n'a rien à répondre.

CÉLIMÈNE

Voilà donc le sujet qui vous trouble l'esprit?

ALCESTE

Vous ne rougissez pas en voyant cet écrit!

CÉLIMÈNE

Et par quelle raison faut-il que j'en rougisse?

ALCESTE

Quoi! vous joignez ici l'audace à l'artifice!
Le désavouerez-vous, pour n'avoir point de seing?

CÉLIMÈNE

Pourquoi désavouer un billet de ma main?

ALCESTE

Et vous pouvez le voir sans demeurer confuse
Du crime dont vers moi son style vous accuse!

CÉLIMÈNE

Vous êtes, sans mentir, un grand extravagant.
(*Elle descend à gauche.*)

ALCESTE

Quoi! vous bravez ainsi ce témoin convaincant!
Et ce qu'il m'a fait voir de douceur pour Oronte
(*Allant auprès de Célimène.*)
N'a donc rien qui m'outrage, et qui vous fasse honte?

CÉLIMÈNE

Oronte! Qui vous dit que la lettre est pour lui?

ALCESTE (*revenant au milieu*)

Les gens qui dans mes mains l'ont remise aujourd'hui.
Mais je veux consentir qu'elle soit pour un autre:

Mon cœur en a-t-il moins à se plaindre du vôtre?
En serez-vous vers moi moins coupable en effet?

CÉLIMÈNE (*allant à Alceste*)

Mais si c'est une femme à qui va ce billet,
En quoi vous blesse-t-il, et qu'a-t-il de coupable?

ALCESTE

Ah! le détour est bon, et l'excuse admirable.
Je ne m'attendais pas, je l'avoue, à ce trait,
Et me voilà par là convaincu tout à fait.
(*Alceste revient à Célimène, qui est au milieu.*)
Osez-vous recourir à ces ruses grossières?
Et croyez-vous les gens si privés de lumières?
Voyons, voyons un peu par quel biais, de quel air,
Vous voulez soutenir un mensonge si clair;
Et comment vous pourrez tourner pour une femme
Tous les mots d'un billet qui montre tant de flamme.
Ajustez, pour couvrir un manquement de foi,
Ce que je m'en vais lire....

CÉLIMÈNE

Il ne me plaît pas, moi.
Je vous trouve plaisant d'user d'un tel empire,
Et de me dire au nez ce que vous m'osez dire.

ALCESTE

Non, non, sans s'emporter, prenez un peu souci
De me justifier les termes que voici....

CÉLIMÈNE

Non, je n'en veux rien faire; et, dans cette occurrence,
Tout ce que vous croirez m'est de peu d'importance.

ALCESTE

De grâce, montrez-moi, je serai satisfait,
Qu'on peut pour une femme expliquer ce billet.

CÉLIMÈNE

Non, il est pour Oronte, et je veux qu'on le croie.
Je reçois tous ses soins avec beaucoup de joie;
J'admire ce qu'il dit, j'estime ce qu'il est,
Et je tombe d'accord de tout ce qu'il vous plaît.
Faites, prenez parti; que rien ne vous arrête,
Et ne me rompez pas davantage la tête.
(*Elle passe à gauche.*)

ALCESTE (*à part*)

Ciel! rien de plus cruel peut-il être inventé!
Et jamais cœur fut-il de la sorte traité!
Quoi! d'un juste courroux je suis ému contre elle,
C'est moi qui me viens plaindre, et c'est moi qu'on querelle!
On pousse ma douleur et mes soupçons à bout,
On me laisse tout croire, on fait gloire de tout;
Et cependant mon cœur est encore assez lâche
Pour ne pouvoir briser la chaîne qui l'attache,
Et pour ne pas s'armer d'un généreux mépris
Contre l'ingrat objet dont il est trop épris!
(*Il fait deux pas vers Célimène.*)
Ah! que vous savez bien ici contre moi-même,
Perfide, vous servir de ma faiblesse extrême,
Et ménager pour vous l'excès prodigieux
De ce fatal amour né de vos traîtres yeux!
Défendez-vous au moins d'un crime qui m'accable,

Et cessez d'affecter d'être envers moi coupable.
Rendez-moi, s'il se peut, ce billet innocent;
A vous prêter les mains ma tendresse consent.
Efforcez-vous ici de paraître fidèle,
Et je m'efforcerai, moi, de vous croire telle.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*En avant du siège 2*)

Allez, vous êtes fou dans vos transports jaloux,
Et ne méritez pas l'amour qu'on a pour vous.
Je voudrais bien savoir qui pourrait me contraindre

(*Alceste recule au milieu en la regardant.*)

A descendre pour vous aux bassesses de feindre;
Et pourquoi, si mon cœur penchait d'autre côté,
Je ne le dirais pas avec sincérité.

(*Elle vient auprès d'Alceste.*)

Quoi! de mes sentiments l'obligeante assurance
Contre tous vos soupçons ne prend pas ma défense?
Auprès d'un tel garant sont-ils de quelque poids?
N'est-ce pas m'outrager que d'écouter leur voix?
Et puisque notre cœur fait un effort extrême,
Lorsqu'il peut se résoudre à confesser qu'il aime,
Puisque l'honneur du sexe, ennemi de nos feux,
S'oppose fortement à de pareils aveux,
L'amant qui voit pour lui franchir un tel obstacle,
Doit-il impunément douter de cet oracle?
Et n'est-il pas coupable en ne s'assurant pas
A ce qu'on ne dit point qu'après de grands combats?
Allez, de tels soupçons méritent ma colère,
Et vous ne valez pas que l'on vous considère.
Je suis sotte, et veux mal à ma simplicité
De conserver encor pour vous quelque bonté;

Je devrais autre part attacher mon estime,
Et vous faire un sujet de plainte légitime.

ALCESTE (*au milieu*)

Ah! traîtresse! mon fable est étrange pour vous;
Vous me trompez sans doute avec des mots si doux.
Mais il n'importe, il faut suivre ma destinée;
A votre foi mon âme est toute abandonnée;
Je veux voir jusqu'au bout quel sera votre cœur,
Et si de me trahir il aura la noirceur.

CÉLIMÈNE

Non, vous ne m'aimez point comme il faut que l'on aime.
(*Elle descend un peu à gauche.*)

ALCESTE

Ah! rien n'est comparable à mon amour extrême;
Et, dans l'ardeur qu'il a de se montrer à tous,
Il va jusqu'à former des souhaits contre vous.
Oui, je voudrais qu'aucun ne vous trouvât aimable;
Que vous fussiez réduite en un sort misérable;
Que le ciel, en naissant, ne vous eût donné rien;
Que vous n'eussiez ni rang, ni naissance, ni bien;
(*Alceste va auprès de Célimène.*)
Afin que de mon cœur l'éclatant sacrifice
Vous pût d'un pareil sort réparer l'injustice;
Et que j'eusse la joie et la gloire en ce jour
De vous voir tenir tout des mains de mon amour.

CÉLIMÈNE

C'est me vouloir du bien d'une étrange manière!
Me préserve le ciel que vous ayez matière . . .

Voici monsieur Du Bois plaisamment figuré. 1435
(*Du Bois entre vivement de droite par la porte C, passe derrière les sièges 4, 5, 6, et vient à Alceste, qui va à lui.*)

"6-25-34"

SCENE IV

CÉLIMÈNE, ALCESTE, DU BOIS

ALCESTE

Que veut cet équipage et cet air effaré ?
Qu'as-tu ?

DU BOIS

Monsieur . . .

ALCESTE

Eh bien !

DU BOIS

Voici bien des mystères.

ALCESTE

Qu'est-ce ?

DU BOIS

Nous sommes mal, monsieur, dans nos affaires.

ALCESTE

Quoi ?

DU BOIS

Parlerai-je haut ?

ALCESTE

Oui, parle, et promptement.

DU BOIS

N'est-il point là quelqu'un ?

ALCESTE

Ah ! que d'amusement !
Veux-tu parler ?

DU BOIS

Monsieur, il faut faire retraite.

ALCESTE

Comment ?

DU BOIS

Il faut d'ici déloger sans trompette.

ALCESTE

Et pourquoi ?

DU BOIS

Je vous dis qu'il faut quitter ce lieu.

ALCESTE

La cause ?

DU BOIS

Il faut partir, monsieur, sans dire adieu.

ALCESTE

Mais par quelle raison me tiens-tu ce langage ?

DU BOIS

Par la raison, monsieur, qu'il faut plier bagage.

ALCESTE

Ah ! je te casserai la tête assurément,
Si tu ne veux, maraud, t'expliquer autrement.

DU BOIS

(*Du Bois effrayé sous la menace d'Alceste descend en avant du siège 5*)

Monsieur, un homme noir et d'habit et de mine
Est venu nous laisser, jusque dans la cuisine,
Un papier griffonné d'une telle façon,
Qu'il faudrait pour le lire être pis qu'un démon.
C'est de votre procès, je n'en fais aucun doute;
Mais le diable d'enfer, je crois, n'y verrait goutte.

ALCESTE (*au milieu*)

Eh bien, quoi ? Ce papier, qu'a-t-il à démêler,
Traître, avec le départ dont tu viens me parler ?

DU BOIS

C'est pour vous dire ici, monsieur, qu'une heure ensuite,
Un homme, qui souvent vous vient rendre visite,
Est venu vous chercher avec empressement,
Et, ne vous trouvant pas, m'a chargé doucement,
Sachant que je vous sers avec beaucoup de zèle,
De vous dire . . . Attendez, comme est-ce qu'il s'appelle ?

ALCESTE

Laisse là son nom, traître, et dis ce qu'il t'a dit.

DU BOIS

C'est un de vos amis enfin, cela suffit:
Il m'a dit que d'ici votre péril vous chasse,
Et que d'être arrêté le sort vous y menace.

ALCESTE

Mais quoi ! n'a-t-il voulu te rien spécifier ?

DU BOIS

Non. Il m'a demandé de l'encre et du papier,
Et vous a fait un mot, où vous pourrez, je pense,
Du fond de ce mystère avoir la connaissance.

ALCESTE

Donne-le donc.

(*Du Bois fouille dans toutes les poches de ses vêtements.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Que peut envelopper ceci?

ALCESTE

(*Allant à Célimène*)

Je ne sais; mais j'aspire à m'en voir éclairci.

(*A Du Bois:*)

Auras-tu bientôt fait, impertinent au diable?

DU BOIS

(*Après avoir longtemps cherché le billet, descend au milieu*)

Moi foi, je l'ai, monsieur, laissé sur votre table.

ALCESTE

Je ne sais qui me tient . . .

(*Il marche sur Du Bois, qui se sauve par la porte C en passant derrière les meubles 4, 5, et 6. Célimène va à Alceste, qui est au fond à droite, en remontant. Tous deux sont auprès de la porte du fond.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Ne vous emportez pas
Et courez démêler un pareil embarras.

ALCESTE

Il semble que le sort, quelque soin que je prenne,
Ait juré d'empêcher que je vous entretienne;
Mais, pour en triompher, souffrez à mon amour
De vous revoir, madame, avant la fin du jour.

(*Il baise la main de Célimène, qui sort au fond, et lui à droite, porte C, pendant que le rideau baisse.*)

FIN DU QUATRIÈME ACTE

(*Pas d'entr'acte.*)

ACTE CINQUIEME

Les meubles sont rangés comme sur le plan. Alceste et Philinte entrent de droite.

SCENE PREMIERE

ALCESTE, PHILINTE

ALCESTE

La résolution en est prise, vous dis-je.

PHILINTE

Mais, quel que soit ce coup, faut-il qu'il vous oblige? . . .

ALCESTE

Non, vous avez beau faire et beau me raisonner,
Rien de ce que je dis ne me peut détourner;
Trop de perversité règne au siècle où nous sommes,
Et je veux me tirer du commerce des hommes.
Quoi! contre ma partie on voit tout à la fois
(*Il vient au milieu, près de Philinte.*)
L'honneur, la probité, la pudeur et les lois;
On publie en tous lieux l'équité de ma cause;
Sur la foi de mon droit mon âme se repose:
Cependant je me vois trompé par le succès;
J'ai pour moi la justice, et je perds mon procès.
Un traître, dont on sait la scandaleuse histoire,
Est sorti triomphant d'une fausseté noire!

Toute la bonne foi cède à sa trahison !
Il trouve, en m'égorgeant, moyen d'avoir raison !
Le poids de sa grimace, où brille l'artifice,
Renverse le bon droit, et tourne la justice !
Il fait par un arrêt couronner son forfait;
Et, non content encor du tort que l'on me fait,
Il court parmi le monde un livre abominable,
Et de qui la lecture est même condamnable,
Un livre à mériter la dernière rigueur,
Dont le fourbe a le front de me faire l'auteur !
Et là-dessus on voit Oronte qui murmure,
Et tâche méchamment d'appuyer l'imposture !
Lui, qui d'un honnête homme à la cour tient le rang,
A qui je n'ai rien fait qu'être sincère et franc,
Qui me vient, malgré moi, d'une ardeur empressée,
Sur des vers qu'il a faits demander ma pensée;
Et parce que j'en use avec honnêteté,
Et ne le veux trahir, lui ni la vérité,
Il aide à m'accabler d'un crime imaginaire !
Le voilà devenu mon plus grand adversaire !
Et jamais de son cœur je n'aurai de pardon,
Pour n'avoir pas trouvé que son sonnet fût bon !
Et les hommes, morbleu ! sont faits de cette sorte !
C'est à ces actions que la gloire les porte !
Voilà la bonne foi, le zèle vertueux,
La justice et l'honneur que l'on trouve chez eux !
Allons, c'est trop souffrir les chagrins qu'on nous forge:
Tirons-nous de ce bois et de ce coupe-gorge.
Puisque entre humains ainsi vous vivez en vrais loups,
Traîtres ! vous ne m'aurez de ma vie avec vous.

(*Il va à gauche. Philinte le suit.*)

PHILINTE

Je trouve un peu bien prompt le dessein où vous êtes,
Et tout le mal n'est pas si grand que vous le faites.
Ce que votre partie ose vous imputer
N'a point eu le crédit de vous faire arrêter;
On voit son faux rapport lui-même se détruire,
Et c'est une action qui pourrait bien lui nuire.

ALCESTE

Lui! de semblables tours il ne craint point l'éclat:
Il a permission d'être franc scélérat;
Et, loin qu'à son crédit nuise cette aventure,
On l'en verra demain en meilleure posture.

PHILINTE

Enfin, il est constant qu'on n'a point trop donné
Au bruit que contre vous sa malice a tourné;
De ce côté déjà vous n'avez rien à craindre;
Et pour votre procès, dont vous pouvez vous plaindre,
Il vous est en justice aisé d'y revenir,
Et contre cet arrêt . . .

(*Il revient au milieu.*)

ALCESTE (*le rejoignant*)

Non, je veux m'y tenir.
Quelque sensible tort qu'un tel arrêt me fasse,
Je me garderai bien de vouloir qu'on le casse.
On y voit trop à plein le bon droit maltraité,
Et je veux qu'il demeure à la postérité,
Comme une marque insigne, un fameux témoignage
De la méchanceté des hommes de notre âge.
Ce sont vingt mille francs qu'il m'en pourra coûter;

Mais pour vingt mille francs j'aurai droit de pester
Contre l'iniquité de la nature humaine,
Et de nourrir pour elle une immortelle haine.

PHILINTE

Mais enfin . . .

ALCESTE

Mais enfin, vos soins sont superflus.
Que pouvez-vous, monsieur, me dire là-dessus?
Aurez-vous bien le front de me vouloir, en face,
Excuser les horreurs de tout ce qui se passe?

PHILINTE

Non, je tombe d'accord de tout ce qu'il vous plaît:
Tout marche par cabale et par pur intérêt;
Ce n'est plus que la ruse aujourd'hui qui l'emporte,
Et les hommes devraient être faits d'autre sorte.
Mais est-ce une raison que leur peu d'équité
Pour vouloir se tirer de leur société?
Tous ces défauts humains nous donnent, dans la vie,
Des moyens d'exercer notre philosophie:
C'est le plus bel emploi que trouve la vertu;
Et si de probité tout était revêtu,
Si tous les cœurs étaient francs, justes et dociles,
La plupart des vertus nous seraient inutiles,
Puisqu'on en met l'usage à pouvoir, sans ennui,
Supporter dans nos droits l'injustice d'autrui;
Et de même qu'un cœur d'une vertu profond . . .
(*Il passe à droite.*)

ALCESTE

Je sais que vous parlez, monsieur, le mieux du monde;
En beaux raisonnements vous abondez toujours;
(*Il va près de Philinte.*)

Mais vous perdez le temps et tous vos beaux discours.
La raison, pour mon bien, veut que je me retire:
Je n'ai point sur ma langue un assez grand empire;
De ce que je dirais je ne répondrais pas,
Et je me jetterais cent choses sur les bras.
Laissez-moi, sans dispute, attendre Célimène.
Il faut qu'elle consente au dessein qui m'amène;
Je vais voir si son cœur a de l'amour pour moi,
Et c'est ce moment-ci qui doit m'en faire foi.

(*Il remonte au milieu.*)

PHILINTE

Montons chez Eliante, attendant sa venue.

ALCESTE

Non: de trop de souci je me sens l'âme émue.
Allez-vous-en la voir, et me laissez enfin
(*Il remonte au fond à droite. Philinte remonte près de la porte C.*)
Dans ce petit coin sombre avec mon noir chagrin.

PHILINTE

C'est une compagnie étrange pour attendre,
Et je vais obliger Eliante à descendre.

(*Il sort par la porte C.*)

SCENE II

CÉLIMÈNE, ORONTE, ALCESTE

(*Alceste s'assied sur le canapé 12. La porte du fond s'ouvre. Oronte donne la main gauche à Célimène; ils entrent du fond, à droite, et descendent au milieu.*)

ORONTE

Oui, c'est à vous de voir si par des nœuds si doux,
Madame, vous voulez m'attacher tout à vous.
Il me faut de votre âme une pleine assurance:
Un amant là-dessus n'aime point qu'on balance.
Si l'ardeur de mes feux a pu vous émouvoir,
Vous ne devez point feindre à me le faire voir;
Et la preuve, après tout, que je vous en demande,
C'est de ne plus souffrir qu'Alceste vous prétende,
De le sacrifier, madame, à mon amour,
Et de chez vous enfin le bannir dès ce jour.

CÉLIMÈNE

Mais quel sujet si grand contre lui vous irrite,
Vous à qui j'ai tant vu parler de son mérite?

ORONTE

Madame, il ne faut point ces éclaircissements;
Il s'agit de savoir quels sont vos sentiments.
Choisissez, s'il vous plaît, de garder l'un ou l'autre;
Ma résolution n'attend rien que la vôtre.

ALCESTE

(*Sortant du coin où il était, se lève et descend. Célimène au milieu. Oronte un peu à gauche.*)

Oui, monsieur a raison: madame, il faut choisir;
Et sa demande ici s'accorde à mon désir.

Pareille ardeur me presse, et même soin m'amène;
Mon amour veut du vôtre une marque certaine:
Les choses ne sont plus pour traîner en longueur,
Et voici le moment d'expliquer votre cœur.

ORONTE

Je ne veux point, monsieur, d'une flamme importune
Troubler aucunement votre bonne fortune.

ALCESTE

Je ne veux point, monsieur, jaloux ou non jaloux,
Partager de son cœur rien du tout avec vous.

ORONTE

Si votre amour au mien lui semble préférable . . .

ALCESTE

Si du moindre penchant elle est pour vous capable . . .

ORONTE

Je jure de n'y rien prétendre désormais.

ALCESTE

Je jure hautement de ne la voir jamais.

ORONTE

Madame, c'est à vous de parler sans contrainte.

ALCESTE

Madame, vous pouvez vous expliquer sans crainte.

ORONTE

Vous n'avez qu'à nous dire où s'attachent vos vœux.

ALCESTE

Vous n'avez qu'à trancher, et choisir de nous deux.

(*Un temps, pendant lequel Célimène reste impassible au milieu de la scène.*)

ORONTE

Quoi ! sur un pareil choix vous semblez être en peine !

ALCESTE

Quoi ! votre âme balance, et paraît incertaine !

CÉLIMÈNE

Mon Dieu ! que cette instance est là hors de saison !
Et que vous témoignez tous deux peu de raison !
Je sais prendre parti sur cette préférence,
Et ce n'est pas mon cœur maintenant qui balance :
Il n'est point suspendu, sans doute, entre vous deux,
Et rien n'est sitôt fait que le choix de nos vœux.
Mais je souffre, à vrai dire, une gêne trop forte
A prononcer en face un aveu de la sorte :
Je trouve que ces mots, qui sont désobligeants,
Ne se doivent point dire en présence des gens ;
Qu'un cœur de son penchant donne assez de lumière
Sans qu'on nous fasse aller jusqu'à rompre en visière ;
Et qu'il suffit enfin que de plus doux témoins
Instruisent un amant du malheur de ses soins.

ORONTE

Non, non, un franc aveu n'a rien que j'appréhende ;
J'y consens pour ma part.

ALCESTE

Et moi, je le demande;
C'est son éclat surtout qu'ici j'ose exiger,
Et je ne prétends point vous voir rien ménager.
Conserver tout le monde est votre grande étude:
Mais plus d'amusement, et plus d'incertitude;
Il faut vous expliquer nettement là-dessus,
Ou bien pour un arrêt je prends votre refus;
Je saurai, de ma part, expliquer ce silence,
Et me tiendrai pour dit tout le mal que j'en pense.

ORONTE

Je vous sais fort bon gré, monsieur, de ce courroux
Et je lui dis ici même chose que vous.

CÉLIMÈNE

Que vous me fatiguez avec un tel caprice!
Ce que vous demandez a-t-il de la justice?
(*On ouvre la porte C.*)
Et ne vous dis-je pas quel motif me retient?
(*Célimène, en regardant à droite, remonte un peu. Alceste descend à droite.*)
J'en vais prendre pour juge Eliante qui vient.

SCENE III

ELIANTE, PHILINTE, CÉLIMÈNE, ORONTE, ALCESTE

(*Eliante et Philinte entrent par la porte C. Eliante va à Célimène.*)

CÉLIMÈNE

Je me vois, ma cousine, ici persécutée
Par des gens dont l'humeur y paraît concertée.

Ils veulent, l'un et l'autre, avec même chaleur,
Que je prononce entre eux le choix que fait mon cœur,
Et que, par un arrêt qu'en face il me faut rendre,
Je défende à l'un d'eux tous les soins qu'il peut prendre.
Dites-moi si jamais cela se fait ainsi

ÉLIANTE

N'allez point là-dessus me consulter ici;
Peut-être y pourriez-vous être mal adressée,
Et je suis pour les gens qui disent leur pensée.

ORONTE

Madame, c'est en vain que vous vous défendez.

ALCESTE

Tous vos détours ici seront mal secondés.

ORONTE

Il faut, il faut parler, et lâcher la balance.
(*Eliante va auprès de Philinte.*)

ALCESTE

Il ne faut que poursuivre à garder le silence.

ORONTE

Je ne veux qu'un seul mot pour finir nos débats.

ALCESTE

(*Il gagne l'extrême droite. Entrent, par la porte C, Clitandre qui donnent la main à Arsinoé, et Acaste, qui est à la gauche d'Arsinoé. Il vient au milieu. Célimène gagne un peu à gauche.*)
Et moi, je vous entends, si vous ne parlez pas.

SCENE IV

ARSINOÉ, CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ALCESTE, PHILINTE, ACASTE, CLITANDRE, ORONTE

ACASTE (*à Célimène*)

Madame, nous venons tous deux, sans vous déplaire,
Eclaircir avec vous une petite affaire.

CLITANDRE

(*A Oronte et à Alceste*)

Fort à propos, messieurs, vous vous trouvez ici;
Et vous êtes mêlés dans cette affaire aussi.

ARSINOÉ (*à Célimène*)

Madame, vous serez surprise de ma vue;
Mais ce sont ces messieurs qui causent ma venue:
Tous deux ils m'ont trouvée, et se sont plaints à moi
D'un trait à qui mon cœur ne saurait prêter foi.
J'ai du fond de votre âme une trop haute estime
Pour vous croire jamais capable d'un tel crime;
Mes yeux ont démenti leurs témoins les plus forts,
Et, l'amitié passant sur de petits discords,
J'ai bien voulu chez vous leur faire compagnie,
Pour vous voir vous laver de cette calomnie.

(*Elle passe derrière Célimène et devant Clitandre.*)

ACASTE (*descendant à gauche*)

Oui, madame, voyons, d'un esprit adouci,
Comment vous vous prendrez à soutenir ceci.
Cette lettre par vous est écrite à Clitandre.

CLITANDRE

Vous avez pour Acaste écrit ce billet tendre.

ACASTE (*à Oronte et à Alceste*)

Messieurs, ces traits pour vous n'ont point d'obscurité,
Et je ne doute pas que sa civilité
A connaître sa main n'ait trop su vous instruire,
Mais ceci vaut assez la peine de le lire:

(*Il ouvre la lettre et lit.*)

« *Vous êtes un étrange homme, Clitandre, de condamner mon enjouement, et de me reprocher que je n'ai jamais tant de joie que lorsque je ne suis pas avec vous. Il n'y a rien de plus injuste; et si vous ne venez bien vite me demander pardon de cette offense, je ne vous la pardonnerai de ma vie. Notre grand flandrin de vicomte . . .*

(*Acaste regarde à droite et à gauche.*)

Il devrait être ici.

« *Notre grand flandrin de vicomte, par qui vous commencez vos plaintes, est un homme qui ne saurait me revenir; et depuis que je l'ai vu, trois quarts d'heure durant, cracher dans un puits pour faire des ronds, je n'ai pu jamais prendre bonne opinion de lui. Pour le petit marquis . . .*

C'est moi-même, messieurs, sans nulle vanité.

« *Pour le petit marquis, qui me tint hier longtemps la main, je trouve qu'il n'y a rien de si mince que toute sa personne; et ce sont de ces mérites qui n'ont que la cape et l'épée. Pour l'homme aux rubans verts . . .*

(*A Alceste:*)

A vous le dé, monsieur.

« *Pour l'homme aux rubans verts, il me divertit quelquefois avec ses brusqueries et son chagrin*

bourru; mais il est cent moments où je le trouve le plus fâcheux du monde. Et pour l'homme à la veste . . .

(*A Oronte:*)

Voici votre paquet.

« *Et pour l'homme à la veste qui s'est jeté dans le bel esprit, et veut être auteur malgré tout le monde, je ne puis me donner la peine d'écouter ce qu'il dit; et sa prose me fatigue autant que ses vers. Mettez-vous donc en tête que je ne me divertis pas toujours si bien que vous pensez; que je vous trouve à dire, plus que je ne voudrais, dans toutes les parties où l'on m'entraîne; et que c'est un merveilleux assaisonnement aux plaisirs qu'on goûte, que la présence des gens qu'on aime.*

CLITANDRE

Me voici maintenant, moi.

« *Votre Clitandre, dont vous me parlez, et qui fait tant le doucereux, est le dernier des hommes pour qui j'aurais de l'amitié. Il est extravagant de se persuader qu'on l'aime; et vous l'êtes de croire qu'on ne vous aime pas. Changez, pour être raisonnable, vos sentiments contre les siens; et voyez-moi le plus que vous pourrez, pour m'aider à porter le chagrin d'en être obsédée.* »

D'un fort beau caractère on voit là le modèle,
Madame, et vous savez comment cela s'appelle.
Il suffit. Nous allons, l'un et l'autre, en tous lieux,
Montrer de votre cœur le portrait glorieux.

ACASTE

J'aurais de quoi vous dire, et belle est la matière;
Mais je ne vous tiens pas digne de ma colère;
Et je vous ferai voir que les petits marquis
Ont, pour se consoler, des cœurs du plus haut prix.

(*Les deux marquis saluent à droite et à gauche. Acaste remonte vivement à droite. Clitandre passe derrière Célimène, rejoint Acaste, et tous deux sortent en riant par la porte C. Oronte passe numéro 2 devant Arsinoé en la saluant.*)

SCENE V

CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ARSINOÉ, ALCESTE, ORONTE, PHILINTE

ORONTE

Quoi! de cette façon je vois qu'on me déchire,
Après tout ce qu'à moi je vous ai vu m'écrire!
Et votre cœur, paré de beaux semblants d'amour,
A tout le genre humain se promet tout à tour!
Allez, j'étais trop dupe, et je vais ne plus l'être;
Vous me faites un bien, me faisant vous connaître:
J'y profite d'un cœur qu'ainsi vous me rendez,
Et trouve ma vengeance en ce que vous perdez.

(*A Alceste:*)

Monsieur, je ne fais plus d'obstacle à votre flamme,
Et vous pouvez conclure affaire avec madame.

(*Oronte salue, passe derrière et sort par la porte C.*)

SCENE VI

CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ARSINOÉ, ALCESTE, PHILINTE

ARSINOÉ (*à Célimène*)
(*Elle s'approche d'elle*)

Certes, voilà le trait du monde le plus noir,
Je ne m'en saurais taire, et me sens émouvoir.
Voit-on des procédés qui soient pareils aux vôtres?
Je ne prends point de part aux intérêts des autres;
(*Montrant Alceste.*)
Mais monsieur, que chez vous fixait votre bonheur,
Un homme, comme lui, de mérite et d'honneur,
Et qui vous chérissait avec idolâtrie,
Devait-il . . .

ALCESTE

Laissez-moi, madame, je vous prie,
Vider mes intérêts moi-même là-dessus;
Et ne vous chargez point de ces soins superflus.
Mon cœur a beau vous voir prendre ici sa querelle,
Il n'est point en état de payer ce grand zèle;
Et ce n'est pas à vous que je pourrai songer,
Si par un autre choix je cherche à me venger.

ARSINOÉ

Hé! croyez-vous, monsieur, qu'on ait cette pensée,
Et que de vous avoir on soit tant empressée?
Je vous trouve un esprit bien plein de vanité,
Si de cette créance il peut s'être flatté.
Le rebut de madame est une marchandise
Dont on aurait grand tort d'être si fort éprise.
Détrompez-vous, de grâce, et portez-le moins haut.

Ce ne sont pas des gens comme moi qu'il vous faut.
Vous ferez bien encor de soupirer pour elle,
Et je brûle de voir une union si belle.

(*Arsinoé fait une révérence, passe derrière Célimène et sort par la porte C. Célimène gagne un peu à gauche. Alceste passe devant Philinte et Eliante et vient au milieu.*)

SCENE VII

CÉLIMÈNE, ELIANTE, ALCESTE PHILINTE

ALCESTE (*à Célimène*)

Eh bien, je me suis tu, malgré ce que je voi,
Et j'ai laissé parler tout le monde avant moi.
Ai-je pris sur moi-même un assez long empire?
Et puis-je maintenant . . .

CÉLIMÈNE

Oui, vous pouvez tout dire;
Vous en êtes en droit, lorsque vous vous plaindrez,
Et de me reprocher tout ce que vous voudrez.
J'ai tort, je le confesse; et mon âme confuse
Ne cherche à vous payer d'aucune vaine excuse.
J'ai des autres ici méprisé le courroux;
Mais je tombe d'accord de mon crime envers vous.
Votre ressentiment sans doute est raisonnable:
Je sais combien je dois vous paraître coupable;
Que toute chose dit que j'ai pu vous trahir,
Et qu'enfin vous avez sujet de me haïr.
Faites-le, j'y consens.

ALCESTE

(*Se rapprochant de Célimène*)

Hé ! le puis-je, traîtresse ?
Puis-je ainsi triompher de toute ma tendresse ?
Et, quoique avec ardeur je veuille vous haïr
Trouvé-je un cœur en moi tout prêt à m'obéir ?
(*Il revient au milieu, près d'Eliante. A Eliante et à Philinte:*)
Vous voyez ce que peut une indigne tendresse,
Et je vous fais tous deux témoins de ma faiblesse.
Mais, à vous dire vrai, ce n'est pas encor tout,
Et vous allez me voir la pousser jusqu'au bout,
Montrer que c'est à tort que sages on nous nomme,
Et que dans tous les cœurs il est toujours de l'homme.
(*A Célimène:*)
Oui, je veux bien, perfide, oublier vos forfaits;
J'en saurai, dans mon âme, excuser tous les traits.
Et me les couvrirai du nom d'une faiblesse
Où le vice du temps porte votre jeunesse,
Pourvu que votre cœur veuille donner les mains
Au dessein que j'ai fait de fuir tous les humains,
Et que dans mon désert, où j'ai fait vœu de vivre,
Vous soyez, sans tarder, résolue à me suivre.
C'est par là seulement que, dans tous les esprits,
Vous pouvez réparer le mal de vos écrits,
Et qu'après cet éclat qu'un noble cœur abhorre,
Il peut m'être permis de vous aimer encore.

CÉLIMÈNE

(*Elle se rapproche d'Alceste*)

Moi, renoncer au monde avant que de vieillir,
Et dans votre désert aller m'ensevelir !

ALCESTE

Et, s'il faut qu'à mes feux votre flamme réponde,
Que vous doit importer tout le reste du monde?
Vos désirs avec moi ne sont-ils pas contents?

CÉLIMÈNE

La solitude effraie une âme de vingt ans.
Je ne sens point la mienne assez grande, assez forte,
Pour me résoudre à prendre un dessein de la sorte.
Si le don de ma main peut contenter vos vœux,
Je pourrai me résoudre à serrer de tels nœuds,
Et l'hymen . . .

ALCESTE

Non. Mon cœur à présent vous déteste,
(*Célimène descend à gauche.*)
Et ce refus lui seul fait plus que tout le reste.
Puisque vous n'êtes point, en des liens si doux,
Pour trouver tout en moi, comme moi tout en vous,
Allez, je vous refuse; et ce sensible outrage
De vos indignes fers pour jamais me dégage.

(*Alceste revient à gauche près d'Eliante, qui se rapproche de lui. Célimène remonte par le milieu, en passant fièrement devant Alceste, qui lui tourne le dos. Arrivée un peu au-dessus, elle se retourne, fait une révérence, attend un mot d'Alceste, puis déploie son éventail d'un mouvement résolu et sort par le fond, à gauche. Alceste gagne à gauche et revient ensuite à Eliante.*)

SCENE VIII

ELIANTE, ALCESTE, PHILINTE

ALCESTE (*à Eliante*)

Madame, cent vertus ornent votre beauté,
Et je n'ai vu qu'en vous de la sincérité.
De vous, depuis longtemps, je fais un cas extrême;
Mais laissez-moi toujours vous estimer de même;
Et souffrez que mon cœur, dans ses troubles divers,
Ne se présente point à l'honneur de vos fers:
Je m'en sens trop indigne, et commence à connaître
Que le ciel pour ce nœud ne m'avait point fait naître;
Que ce serait pour vous un hommage trop bas
Que le rebut d'un cœur qui ne vous valait pas;
Et qu'enfin. . . .

ÉLIANTE

Vous pouvez suivre cette pensée:
Ma main de se donner n'est pas embarrassée;
Et voilà votre ami, sans trop m'inquiéter,
Qui, si je l'en priais, la pourrait accepter.

PHILINTE

Ah! cet honneur, madame, est toute mon envie,
Et j'y sacrifierais et mon sang et ma vie.

ALCESTE

(*Passe devant Eliante, prend la main de Philinte, puis celle d'Eliante.*)

Puissiez-vous, pour goûter de vrais contentments,
L'un pour l'autre à jamais garder ces sentiments!

Trahi de toutes parts, accablé d'injustices,
Je vais sortir d'un gouffre où triomphent les vices,
Et chercher sur la terre un endroit écarté,
Où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté.

(*Il sort vivement par la porte C. Philinte tend la main droite à Eliante.*)

PHILINTE

Allons, madame, allons employer toute chose,
Pour rompre le dessein que son cœur se propose.

(*Tous deux sortent par la porte C pendant que le rideau baisse.*)

FIN DU MISANTHROPE

NOTES

ACT I

The engravings of the 1667 and 1682 editions show Alceste seated, his head turned toward Philinte standing at his right. Following this hint some editions, notably Livet's, have these characters "on-stage" as the curtain rises. Cailhava in *Etudes sur Molière* declares that Grandval, the famous actor of the eighteenth century, did not cross the stage slowly, as other Alcestes had done, to seat himself, but held a chair as the curtain rose, then, shoving it forward angrily, seated himself, and spoke the earlier verses, especially 5, with great excitement. Some such angry beginning of Alceste's rôle would be most appropriate to his character.

All five acts take place in Célimène's reception room, which is on the second floor of her home (see 253, 532, 851). Eliante's apartment is on the third floor (see 1581, 1586). The general reception rooms of a French mansion of the time were on the first floor, or what we would call the second story, the first or ground floor being called *rez de chaussée.*

1. De Visé, who was present at the first performance, said: « Le Misanthrope, par son action, fait connaître que c'est lui, avant même d'ouvrir la bouche. » Note that the two men, although intimate friends, use the pronoun *vous.* Only rustic people used *tu* and *toi* in the seventeenth century. Cf. note to 601 where the *tu* used suggests undue familiarity. See also notes 334–335, 338.

3. **courez:** Alceste uses vigorous words; cf. **court,** 52; **prostituée,** 54, etc. His character does not permit him to veil his meaning.

4–5. **on:** Philinte is more apt to soften his phrases by an indefinite pronoun; Alceste's more direct nature uses *moi, je;* note also Alceste's frequent use of **je veux:** 5 (twice), 12, 35, 63, 69, etc. This is another indication of his strong-willed, unyielding nature; he does not soften it to « je voudrais. »

6. **chagrins:** *See vocabulary* **chagrin.** Thirion defines **chagrin** as « accès de mauvaise humeur; ce mot désigne aussi, dans la langue du XVII^e siècle, la délicatesse malveillante qui critique et reprend toute chose. » Regnard used this verse in *Le Distrait* (Act I, Scene i):

Dans vos brusques *humeurs* je ne puis vous comprendre.

8. **Rayez cela de vos papiers:** proverbial expression, equivalent to « ne comptez pas là-dessus »; the idea seems to be of a bad debt that never can be collected and that might as well be written off; 'do not trust to that'; 'dismiss that from your mind.'

9. **de l'être:** the l' refers to the idea of « ami » in 8.

11. **le:** likewise refers to « ami » in 8. **net:** Alceste is fond of this word (cf. 63, 447), another characteristic of his uncompromising nature.

14. **devriez:** the **-iez** here counts as two syllables, although Molière usually counts it as one; see note 499–500. **pure** is placed here before its noun to indicate an absolute and essential quality; cf. **pure** in 387.

15–16. 'There's no excusing such an action, and every man of honor must be shocked by it.' **action:** in poetry the noun-ending **-ion** usually counts as two syllables, but the verb-ending **-ions** as one.

16. **s'en doit scandaliser:** Note the position of the object pronouns *before* the auxiliary verb **doit,** instead of, as now, before the subordinate infinitive. In Molière's time the normal position was before the auxiliary; see other instances 28, 37, 266, 277, 429, 523, 560, 784, 880, 894, 1135, 1219, 1255, 1358, 1374, 1430, 1458, 1484, 1509–1510, 1710, 1798. Toward the end of the seventeenth century such object pronouns had gradually, for the most part, assumed their modern position, and even in Molière this change had begun. See instances of the modern position at verses 15, 538, 935, 1004, 1402, 1726.

17–20. Molière ridiculed these various forms of affectation and and social hypocrisy frequently. Note especially the stage-business of Jodelet's entrance in scene xi of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, and also verses 99–102 of *Les Fâcheux*. Such greetings had long been the custom among men at the royal court, and hence were widely imitated in lower social circles. These *caresses* consisted of rushing at each other with arms wide apart, embracing and kissing. Writers before Molière had made fun of such customs, notably Montaigne and Henri Estienne. Barclay in 1709 wrote of the French nobles:

> Ils étouffent les gens à force de les embrasser; ils leur serrent la main, et puis ils les reprennent encore entre leurs bras. . . . Et puis, quand vous

leur demandez qui sont ces personnes, ils vous répondent froidement qu'ils ne les connaissent pas.

Quinault in *La Mère Coquette* 1664, Act I, Scene iii, had already heaped ridicule upon this exaggerated and false politeness. Cf. also *Le Joueur* de Regnard verses 530–536 (Act II, Scene iv).

La Bruyère in *Les Caractères* IX, 48 says:

Théognis embrasse un homme qu'il trouve sous sa main; il lui presse la tête contre sa poitrine; il demande ensuite qui est celui qu'il a embrassé.

Such greetings were simply marks of politeness and really meant little more than the shaking of hands and the 'happy to meet you' of today. Even on meeting in church they were customary, although disapproved of there by Courtin in his *Traité de Civilité.* In our own day princes still have this custom of kissing each other when on official visits, and in the French army the officer conferring a decoration kisses the man who receives it, no matter what his rank. In general it may be said that men in Europe kiss each other more than in America in family circles. All of this is a residue of ancient custom.

For further references in the *Misanthrope* to this custom of embracing on all occasions, see verses 37, 45, 273, 655, 1161.

18. **dernières:** a frequent word in Molière the use of which he had, nevertheless, ridiculed in *Les Précieuses Ridicules.* Many words and expressions of the *précieuses* had become so fixed in the language that even Molière finally adopted them.

19–20. We should realize that exaggeration is a part of Alceste's character.

21. **quel est** = modern **qui est,** which latter, because of its hiatus, was not permitted in verse. Note that the cæsura comes after the eighth syllable, instead of after the sixth as usual; the effect is to emphasize the phrase « quel est cet homme. »

22. Regnard in *Les Ménechmes* has (Act IV, Scene ii):

A peine *pouvons-nous* dire comme il se nomme. (Cf. note 6.)

comme for modern **comment:** cf. vocabulary **comme.**

23. **en vous séparant:** the seventeenth century was much freer in the use of participial and infinitive phrases the subjects of which were not the same as those of the main clause. This

free construction is known as *anacoluthon*. Molière uses such constructions with great frequency and effectiveness.

24. **à moi** merely repeats and emphasizes *me*. **indifférent** = 'one for whom you care nothing.'

25. **morbleu:** an euphemistic oath of no particular value; Alceste's excitable nature accounts for his frequent use of it; see 60, 109, 180, 326, 337, 514, 659, 687, 771, 1234, 1517. Of these 514 is the only one used to a lady (Célimène), but others are used in the presence of ladies. Alceste uses other oaths: **diantre,** 364; **parbleu,** 236, 445; **têtebleu,** 141; **par la sangbleu,** 773. In this he is in great contrast to Philinte whose **mon Dieu,** 145 and **ma foi,** 182 are scarcely oaths at all. The other men prefer **parbleu** which is a little milder than **morbleu:** Oronte uses it once, 285; Clitandre once, 567; Acaste four times, 575, 781, 807, 845; Acaste also says **Dieu me damne,** 649. Apparently ladies never used such oaths, but among men of fashion they were common. It is of interest to note that *morbleu* is used in the *Misanthrope* more than in all the other plays of Molière put together, to judge by the *Lexique* of the Despois-Mesnard edition (Vol. XIII, pages 175, 235). See an interesting article entitled *Jurons* in Livet's *Lexique de la langue de Molière* Vol. II, pages 622–624.

26. We might expect a *que* before **de s'abaisser** in accordance with note 58, but Molière feels free in his observance of rules of syntax; see another instance 908. **trahir son âme = dire le contraire de ce qu'on pense.**

27. **par un malheur:** today *un* is not necessary; here it is equivalent to 'some.'

28. **Je m'irais . . . pendre** for modern **j'irais me pendre;** cf. note 16. **Tout** as emphatic adverb was more common than now, being used where its need is no longer felt; cf. **tout maintenant** in *Ecole des Femmes*, 960. Cf. also note 1188.

29. Philinte stresses ironically the word **pendable.**

30–31. "You will allow me to mitigate a little the severity of your sentence." (Wall.)

In **supplierai** the mute **e** is ignored in pronunciation; cf. notes 193, 695. **sur = au sujet de.**

33. **la plaisanterie:** i.e. the play upon the syllable *pend* in

pendable, 29 and **pende,** 32, both used in irony of Alceste's **pendre** in 28. The jest is not 'in bad grace' (i.e. out of place); rather is Alceste in bad humor. He seems to like the word; cf. **pendable** in 772.

37–38. **joie: monnoie:** a possible rhyme then because *oi* in both words was still pronounced *oué*. Now, however, *monnoie* has become *monnaie*, and the *oi* of *joie* is pronounced *wah*. Modern actors usually pronounce this *monnoie* as they must *joie*. In 225–226 there is another rhyme possible only in Molière's day: **veuve: treuve.**

38. **il faut bien:** see similar use of this phrase by Philinte in 65. Philinte makes social custom, whether good or bad, his guide in conduct. Unlike Alceste he is always afraid of what others will say. So also is Célimène; note especially her replies 461–464, 489–492, 539–540, 542–548.

41. This verse may have slipped in from *Le Favori* of Mlle Desjardins which was then being played by Molière's company There the verse runs:

Non, je ne puis souffrir cette *étrange* méthode.

Non: note the extraordinarily frequent use of **non** by Alceste as indicative of his inflexible, uncompromising character. Cf. instances 67, 118, 189, 191, 225, 465, 550, 561, 566, 659, 741, 1121, 1483, 1540, 1541, 1582, 1779. See especially the double **non** in 53, 691, 1121, 1359, and the triple **non** in 1269. Remark also the vigorous negations: **point** 564 and **point d'affaire,** 554. The fact that he uses **oui** far less frequently (81, 114, 236, 451, 522, 1603, 1757; double **oui,** 1809, 1317) seems to bear out the justice of Célimène's criticism of his fondness for denying and contradicting (see 669–680). In any event there is nothing colorless about him. He is a man of 'yes' and 'no,' frank and direct, with no evasions or subterfuges.

42. **vos** is satirical and contemptuous.

44–46. Note the rhyming words within these verses: **faiseurs: donneurs: diseurs,** in each case in the cæsura. Such rhymes were condemned by Malherbe, but here they are entirely justified because of the desired emphasis. The ending **–eurs** connotes contempt, and is even suggestive of mercenary or selfish purpose.

47–48. **combat: fat:** the *t* of *fat* is usually pronounced, although it was not always sounded at that time. If pronounced, we have a case of *rime pauvre* of which the play has several examples; see **vous: tous** (931–932) and other instances in the Introduction, *Versification*. **avec tous font combat:** 'assault everybody'; 'try to excell all rivals.' *faire* had a far wider use in the seventeenth century in such expressions as *faire querelle*, *faire estime*, *faire raillerie*, *faire regrets*, *faire satisfaction*, etc., many of which are no longer used.

48. **l'honnête homme:** plural *honnêtes gens*, 360. The *honnête homme* has already been defined by Alceste (verse 16) as *homme d'honneur*. Other definitions are those of Despois-Mesnard (Vol. V, p. 466, note 3): « galant homme, homme du monde accompli, chez qui ne se remarque aucune singularité et surtout aucune prétention, » and of Gache: « l'homme bien élevé et qui a du mérite. » He was the man of birth, culture, dignity, courage, and good breeding, especially as custom required him to be in the seventeenth century, in short the perfect gentleman. In 1640 Faret published a work entitled *L'Honnête homme*. A summary of Faret's definition and description may be found in a note to verse 48 of Livet's edition of the *Misanthrope*. The expression occurs again 140, 370, 633, 1507; cf. note 370.

51. **vous fasse de vous:** the closeness of the two **vous** is not pleasing; the first is a sort of weak dative and seems superfluous.

52. **faquin:** from Italian *facchino*, a porter; hence any man of little education or refinement, the direct opposite of *honnête homme*. Brette suggests 'puppy,' 'scamp' as the equivalent here. **en,** which is practically untranslatable, refers vaguely to the whole preceding statement 49–51.

53. **il n'est point** for **il n'y a point.** The forms of *y avoir* are not admissible in good poetry because of the hiatus between *y* and the verb-form; cf. *il est*, 73. **âme un peu bien située:** Despois-Mesnard suggests: « il n'y a point de cœur un peu bien placé, d'âme un peu haute, un peu fière. »

55–56. These verses have bothered commentators because of the uncertainty whether **glorieuse** refers to **estime** in 54 or to **âme** in 53. Voltaire preferred **estime,** but Auger chose **âme.** If the reference is to **estime** (which on the whole we prefer), **glorieuse**

means 'flattering' or 'honorable,' and **a** means 'possesses.' If the reference is to **âme, glorieuse** might mean 'haughty,' or 'vain' and **a** 'enjoys.' **régals peu chers:** 'but slight charm.'

56. Although the first **on** means 'we' and the second refers to other people, this line is perfectly clear. Molière makes exceptionally clever use of *on* in *Le Tartuffe* (especially in the scene where Orgon is under the table); there its meaning constantly shifts, but no confusion results. See other double uses of *on:* 355–356, 693–694, 1179; cf. note 1179.

58. **c'est . . . que:** when *ce* or *c'* plus some form of *être* introduces a sentence and is followed by a *que* or *qu'*, (*see cases under* **être** *in vocabulary*) the best translation is to take as logical subject what immediately follows the *que* thus ignoring both the *ce* and the *que*. Thus here: 'to honor everybody is to honor nobody.' Molière occasionally omits the *que* of such constructions especially before infinitives; see instances 26, 158, 908.

59–60. **temps: gens:** rhymes unsatisfactory to the eye were condemned by Malherbe but permitted by the *Art Poétique* of Port Royal. As Molière's verse is intended primarily for the ear, such rhymes are common; cf. *nœud: peu*, 295–296; *temps: ans*, 983–984; *marquis: prix*, 1697–1698 and many other instances.

59. **y donnez dans les vices:** 'give in to, yield to, the vices . . .' the **y** simply anticipates and hence emphasizes the **dans;** it is not necessary as shown by 220; compare **donner au** 1535–1536.

60. **vous n'êtes pas pour être:** a peculiar construction which requires the insertion of some such word as *fait* before the *pour* to clarify the meaning. Similar cases at 260, 673, 1607, 1781. Translate: 'you are not fitted to be among my associates,' i.e. 'I will have nothing to do with you.'

63. **qu'on me distingue:** Thirion thinks that this is an indication of Alceste's self-esteem and hence an imperfection; Lanson does not so think. It is natural for a person of merit to desire to be distinguished and differentiated from one who has none, and this is all that Alceste apparently has in mind.

63–64. **net: fait:** same rhyme 447–448. The *t* of *net* is occasionally pronounced, and one sometimes hears the *t* of *fait* when used as a noun and ending, as here, the sentence. However, in

view of the rhyme *net: fait* of *Les Femmes Savantes* (1539–1540) and verses 447–448 of *Le Misanthrope*, it is more likely that Molière intended silent *t* in both words. See the Despois-Mesnard *Lexique* under *net*.

64. **n'est point du tout mon fait:** 'is not at all to my liking.' The whole line may be rendered scornfully: "The friend of all mankind is no friend of mine." (Wall)

66. **rendre . . . dehors civils:** Molière uses this expression in analogy to *rendre des civilités*, *rendre des soins . . . des devoirs . . . des respects*, etc.

69. 'I wish a man to be a man'; this enters into Alceste's conception of an *honnête homme;* cf. note 48. **rencontre:** 'occasion'; 'conjuncture.'

71. **lui = cœur:** 70.

72. **jamais:** another instance of Alceste's uncompromising and hence, intolerant nature.

72–73. Philinte has here in reality changed the question since *pleine franchise* is quite another matter than *vains compliments* to which latter Alceste quite rightly objects. However he follows Philinte's new lead and it is precisely here that he becomes "off-centre."

73. **il est** for **il y a.** Cf. note 53.

75. 'may it not displease your severe sense of honor.' **déplaise:** similar use in 577.

76. **bon:** 'well,' perhaps also with connotation of 'prudent,' 'wise,' or even 'charitable.'

79. The five *qu* sounds in this verse are somewhat displeasing: Voltaire blamed the poet for this cacophony. Cf. notes 736, 742. **on a = il y a,** but is somewhat more personal.

80–88. Compare Montaigne « Il ne faut pas toujours dire tout, car ce serait sottise; mais ce qu'on dit, il faut qu'il soit tel qu'on le pense. » (*Essais* II, xvii.)

80. **lui** refers to **quelqu'un** in 79. The meaning of the line is: 'ought we to let him know it?'

81. **Emilie:** the first of the many *portraits* of which *Le Misanthrope* has more than any of Molière's plays. See especially *la scène des portraits* (Act II, Scene v, verses 567 ff.). Such brief descriptions of the ridiculous features of people were much in

favor, and Molière made clever use of the fashion to enlarge the scope of his picturing of society's frailties. A modern author, not subject, as was Molière, to severe restrictions of space, would have added many of these individuals to the cast of characters. *Les Caractères* of La Bruyère, 1688 were essentially little else than a series of such *portraits*.

82. **il sied mal:** 'it is unseemly;' *sied* from the defective verb *seoir*.

83. **blanc:** see 942 where Arsinoé is censured for the same practice. Cotgrave's *French-English Dictionary* of 1611 says under this word: "Blanc d'Espagne, ceruse, or white lead, wherewith women paint." Women used then more white than rouge because of the white wigs in fashion at that time.

85–86. **lasse** with long **a** in rhyme with **race** with short **a**. Such rhymes were then possible because of the tendency of the time to lengthen all **a's**. The *Art Poétique* of Port Royal authorized such verses, but the privilege is no longer possible in modern poetry. See the Introduction, *Versification*, for a list of many instances in this play.

86. **à conter** for modern **en contant.**

87–88. The rhyme **point: point** is possible because the two differ in meaning; such rhymes are, however, usually avoided.

90. **qu'objets** for modern **que des objets:** indefinite articles were often omitted in the seventeenth century. **à m'échauffer la bile:** 'to stir my wrath.'

92. **font:** 'do.' Molière frequently uses *faire* to avoid repeating the same verb. See analogous use in *Le Tartuffe*, 185.

> Il l'appelle son frère, et l'aime dans son âme
> Cent fois qu'il ne *fait*, mère, fils, fille et femme.

Verse 92 is much transposed; the prose order would be:

Quand je vois les hommes vivre entre eux comme ils font.

93–94. All of these human failings will be dealt with in the play and Alceste will be the victim of each in turn.

95. 'I cannot stand it any longer; it drives me mad.'

96. **de rompre en visière à tout le genre humain:** 'to attack all mankind face to face.' Cf. 1634. *See also* **rompre** in the vocabulary. The visor was that part of a knight's helmet that protected his face; it could be raised and lowered.

97. **philosophe** is here an adjective as in 166.

98. **noirs accès:** 'gloomy fits': ordinarily an adjective of color follows its noun; but here, in figurative and emphatic use, it may precede; such position was, however, optional; cf. **noire,** 91.

99. **sous mêmes soins nourris:** 'brought up in the same manner.'

100. **l'Ecole des Maris:** this play by Molière appeared in 1661; it was based upon the *Adelphi* of Terence, but shows the marked independence that had already characterized the author in still earlier comedies. The story treats of education and the best way to earn the gratitude and affection of youth. Two brothers, Sganarelle and Ariste, are educating their wards, Isabelle and Léonor, wishing to marry them. Sganarelle is suspicious and crabbed; consequently he fails to win Isabelle who deceives him and marries the young Valère; Ariste, trustful and sympathetic, inspires love in Léonor who weds him. Sganarelle says in Act I that people blame in him

> Cette farouche humeur, dont la séverité
> Fuit toutes les douceurs de la société.

These words fit Alceste rather well, but it would be an injustice to compare Sganarelle with Alceste in other respects, as Philinte would here suggest.

Molière frequently refers thus to his earlier plays, notably in *Le Malade Imaginaire* (Act III, Scene iii), *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas*, *L'Ecole des Femmes* and *L'Impromptu de Versailles*. The edition of 1682 of *Le Misanthrope* indicates that these verses 99–102 were suppressed in the performances.

105. **tout franc:** 'in all frankness.'

106. **donne la comédie:** 'makes you a laughing-stock.' In the seventeenth century one could say *donner la comédie*, *donner le bal*, and even *donner une dissection*.

108. **Vous tourne en ridicule:** *vous change en un homme ridicule* (Thirion). This use of adjectives as nouns became very extensive in the seventeenth century, partly because of the influence of the *précieuses;* cf. the use of *tendre*, *doux*, *passionné* in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (Scene iv). Although Molière plainly makes fun of such

use in that play, yet he could not apparently free himself from it; cf. note 18.

104–108. Philinte now attacks vigorously, thus angering Alceste despite his apparent fondness for frank speech. Consequently Alceste's language becomes increasingly intemperate.

112. Note the 'holier than thou' attitude of Alceste, a form of conceit. Montaigne puts the matter more charitably:

> J'aime une sagesse gaie et civile, et fuit l'âpreté des mœurs et l'austérité, ayant pour suspecte toute mine rébarbative. . . . la vertu est qualité plaisante et voluptueuse. (*Essais* III, v.)

113. 'You are greatly incensed against human nature.'

117. 'Yet there are many in our present age.' **en = mortels,** 115.

118. **elle = aversion,** 116.

118–122. Doubtless Molière is here recalling the saying which Erasmus (1467–1536) in Book VI of his *Apophthegmata*, 1531 attributed to Timon of Athens who was called 'the misanthrope':

> They asked Timon of Athens why he pursued all men with his hatred: "The wicked," he replied, "I hate rightfully; the others I hate because they do not hate the wicked."

120–121. **pour être . . . Et n'avoir pas:** 'because they are . . . and have not'; In Molière's day *pour* could introduce a causal clause (cf. 439, 1331, 1516); this fact permitted greater variety, as, for instance, here where *parce que* has just been used, 119. Note a similar substitution of *de* for *lorsque* in 1737–1738.

124. **j'ai procès:** note the omission of the indefinite article now required. Molière has much of the freer syntax of the sixteenth century. See Introduction: *Syntax*. The bitterness of this passage may have been meant for one of Molière's enemies, perhaps the preacher Pierre Roullé in whose work *Le roi glorieux du monde* Molière is attacked as a devil who should be burned!

126. **pour tout ce qu'il peut être:** i.e. for every possible rascality.

128. **qui ne sont pas d'ici:** 'who are strangers here.'

129. **pied-plat:** 'vulgar person'; here perhaps 'sneaking fellow'; 'low-bred, abject scoundrel' as suggested from the previous verses. The connection between flat-footedness and vulgarity

seems based upon the idea that a hard-laboring peasant by wearing heelless shoes was apt to lose the flexibility of his arches and thus become unfit for the army; also, inversely, because the aristocracy wore very high-heeled shoes. In *Le Tartuffe*, 59 Damis applies the same term to the villainous Tartuffe; indeed critics have noted the striking similarity of Alceste's enemy to Tartuffe.

130. **sales emplois:** 'dirty methods.' i.e. **la brigue** *of* 139.

131. **eux = emplois,** 130.

133. **titres honteux:** Gache thinks that the **titres** are those of 135; perhaps, however, the meaning is that whatever titles **he** wins by **sales emplois,** 130 and **la brigue,** 139 become thereby shameful.

134. **pour lui: lui** refers to *honneur;* 'his wretched honor finds no defender.' In *L'Impromptu de Versailles* (end of Scene i) almost the same expression occurs: *un misérable honneur dont personne ne se soucie.*

137. **grimace:** cf. 1497 where the same word is also applied to him.

140. **l'emporter:** here the l' might perhaps apply directly to **rang,** 139, but usually in this idiom the l' refers vaguely to some prize or victory that is won or 'carried away.'

141. The unusual position of **mortelles** before its noun gives added emphasis; cf. **misérable** in 134.

142. This verse, indeed the whole passage from 125 on, reminds one strongly of the second scene of the fifth act of *Don Juan* containing the famous description of hypocrisy, the essence of which is:

> L'hypocrisie est aujourd'hui un vice privilégié.

144. **désert:** the first indication of his ultimate decision in Act V. We are not to think of some Sahara-like locality, but merely of Alceste's own description of **un endroit écarté où d'être homme d'honneur on ait la liberté** (1805–1806). Note **mon désert** again in 1763 and Célimène's ironical repetition **votre désert,** 1770. Népomucène Lemercier said of such a purpose:

> Si nous voulions fuir le monde à l'aspect des injustices et ne point tolérer les méchants autour de nous, il ne resterait plus personne dans la ville.

145–147. **mettons . . . faisons . . . examinons:** Philinte shows his conciliatory spirit in these first person plurals which soften the intended rebuke by making it general. Only with 159 does he become personal.

145. 'Let us worry less about the manners of the time.'

148. **douceur:** 'indulgence,' 'forbearance,' i.e. charity. Philinte has found the right word.

149. **vertu traitable:** suggestive of what Elmire asked for in *Le Tartuffe* (verse 1334):

> Je veux une vertu qui ne soit point diablesse.

152. **sage avec sobriété:** 'wise with moderation.' Perhaps suggested by the *sapere ad sobrietatem* of Saint Paul (*Romans* XII, 3). The idea is a favorite one with the ancients; Pythagoras having said: "Moderation in all things is the best rule," and Theognis: "One must follow a medial way." Montaigne, steeped in ancient lore, writes:

> Nous pouvons saisir la vertu de façon qu'elle en deviendra vicieuse, si nous l'embrassons d'un désir trop âpre et violent. . . . On peut et trop aimer la vertu et se porter excessivement en une action juste. A ce biais s'accommode la voix divine: « Ne soyez pas plus sages qu'il ne faut, mais soyez sages sobrement. » (*Essais* I, xxix.)

154. **communs usages:** even when not emphatic, the adjective could in Molière's day precede the noun with greater freedom than now; cf. **l'humaine nature,** 174; **aversion grande,** 837. The exigency of the verse sometimes permits this changed position.

156. Philinte's view here coincides again with Montaigne who said that we must live with the living, and let the river run under the bridge without our care (*Essais* III, viii).

157. **à nulle autre seconde:** a *précieuse* expression ridiculed by Boileau (*Satires* II, 37). Cf. **sans seconde,** 521.

158. Modern French would require a *que* before *de vouloir;* cf. note 58. The sentiment of 157–158 is not Molière's, for he declares that his purpose is to correct men by amusing them.

160. **prenant:** another instance of the freer use of the present participle; here equivalent to a *si* clause.

162. the **être** seems superfluous.

163. Marcus Aurelius has the same thought: "We cannot

make men as we would wish them, we must therefore endure them as they are."

165. **cour . . . ville:** Molière not infrequently contrasts Paris and the royal court. At court, life was more refined, more subject to etiquette; in Paris there was greater freedom and consequently greater coarseness of manners.

166. **flegme:** one of the four cardinal humors recognized in ancient medical theory; the phlegm was supposed to make men lazy, sleepy, fat and indifferent. The other three 'humors' were the choler or yellow bile, melancholy or black bile, and the blood.

167. **raisonnez:** this is the reading of the 1674, 1682 and 1734 editions and seems preferable to *raisonne*, although Despois-Mesnard, Gache, Lanson-Mornet and Boully choose the latter. Laun also has *raisonne* and says that the antecedent of *qui* is *flegme*.

168. **s'échauffer:** as the phlegm was considered a cold, damp 'humor' the idea of its becoming warmer is appropriate.

169. **il faut:** here seems to be weakened to a mere auxiliary meaning; 'if it should chance'; cf. similar use, 1199, 1771, also *Le Tartuffe*, 843.

169–172. **qu',** 169, **que,** 171 and **qu',** 171 are in the same dependence upon **s'il faut.** These lines, especially 169–170 remind one of the plot of *Le Tartuffe*. It may also be recalled that at this time Molière had been betrayed by Racine and calumniated by Montfleury.

174. The exigency of the verse may here have forced the unusual position of the adjective.

175–178. The **plus** of 175 connects with **que,** 'than' of 177. In this passage Philinte is really more hopelessly pessimistic than Alceste who at least points the way to better things. Seneca in *De ira* (Book II, Chapters ix and x) utters similar sentiments, and La Bruyère says:

> Ne nous emportons point contre les hommes en voyant leur dureté, leur ingratitude, leur injustice, leur fierté, l'amour d'eux-mêmes, et l'oubli des autres; ils sont ainsi faits, c'est leur nature, c'est ne pouvoir supporter que la pierre tombe ou que le feu s'élève (*Les Caractères: De l'homme* 1).

179. Translate **je me verrai** as a question, and the infinitives as past-participles.

180–181. Baron, favorite pupil of Molière, who inherited his master's rôles, spoke from **Morbleu** on as an aside. This interpretation seems erroneous, since, to judge by **garder le silence** of 182 Philinte is supposed to hear Alceste's final words. Cf. note 334.

182. **ferez:** the 1682 edition has a variant *feriez.*

183. **partie:** the individual described by Alceste 123–140.

185. **en = soins,** 184.

186. **qui . . . qui:** this use of two *qui's* so close together would be avoided today. In *Le Tartuffe* (446–448) is a peculiar instance of four pronouns together:

MARIANE . . . Qui voulez-vous, mon père, que je dise
Qui me touche le cœur, et qu'il me serait doux
De voir par votre choix devenir mon époux?
ORGON. Tartuffe.

Cf. notes 79, 743.

188. It was more or less a civil custom to call socially upon a judge both before and after trial of one's lawsuit. Gifts were often taken to him, especially in the rural districts where the judges, ignorant and venal for the most part, lived to a great extent from such presents. These gifts were usually game or wine, but often took the more valuable form of rich fabrics or even jewelry. Often an entire family would pay such a visit which was apparently one of those « dehors civils que l'usage demande, » to use Philinte's words of verse 66.

The dangers of such a practice were obvious especially when one realizes how corrupt the courts then were. Judges often paid vast sums for their posts. Saint-Simon tells us that the position of « Président à mortier au Parlement de Paris » cost 750,000 livres plus 20,000 livres' worth of wine. In *Les Plaideurs* (1668) of Racine, Act I, Scene vi, this custom of gifts to judges is ridiculed. La Bruyère pointed out its dangers in *Les Caractères: De quelques usages, 44.* Molière will attack it again in Act II, Scene v, of *Les Fourberies de Scapin.* Above all J. J. Rousseau protested in his celebrated discussion of *Le Misanthrope* (in the *Lettre à d'Alembert*). More recently Anatole France ridiculed corrupt judges in *La Comédie de celui qui épousa une femme muette.* A specific case of this custom of gifts to judges is that

of Beaumarchais who, having lost a lawsuit, reclaimed his gifts by process of law (the celebrated *affaire Goëzman*).

In *Le Misanthrope* we are left to imagine by verses 190–195 that Alceste's antagonist used the methods customarily employed but rejected by Alceste, whose idealism here, as everywhere else in the play, is far in advance of his age. In any event Alceste loses his case (see Act V, Scene i).

191. **en:** vague use: 'in this matter.'

193. **remuerai** counts only three syllables as does **supplierai,** 30 and **avouerai** in 695; in each case the mute **e** of **erai** is ignored.

195. **succès:** 'the outcome,' 'the result.' Beware of translating by the cognate or apparent English equivalent.

197–200. See his similar thought in a later emergency 1419–1420.

197. **plaiderie:** an old word of the Norman dialect where in the island of Guernsey it is still used in the sense of *plaidoirie*. Alceste probably uses the old form to show ironic contempt. *plaiderie* is omitted from French dictionaries after 1650, but may still be heard in the Berry dialect.

200. Thirion and Gache see in **univers** evidence of Alceste's vanity in thinking that many people would feel interested in his troubles. However the word means scarcely more than *tout le monde*, 'everybody.'

201. **m'en coûtât-il:** inverted imperfect subjunctive; 'even if it should cost me.'

grand'chose: cf. **grand'ville,** 394, 406; **grand'basques,** 746, and such examples as *grand'mère, grand'croix, grand'route, grand'messe, grand'salle, grand'peur, grand'peine, grand'bande*, etc.; *grand*, coming from the third Latin declension, had the same form for masculine and feminine, until analogy with adjectives derived from the first and second declensions gave an *e* to its feminine. The old form persists in the above examples; really, therefore, the apostrophe is not justified historically. Cf. *lettres royaux, cités forts*, etc. of Villehardouin and other old writers.

203. **se rirait:** many intransitive verbs were formerly reflexive merely for added emphasis.

208. **la:** refers probably to both **droiture,** 207 and its synonym **rectitude,** 206.

ce que, and **ce qui,** 212 were commonly used for *celui qui, celui que, celle qui, celle que.* The reference is to Célimène as is also that of **objet** in 223. Such use of the neuter demonstrative for persons is no longer found.

209–210. **étant** has as its subjects **vous et le genre humain;** hence the plural agreement of **brouillés;** we have another case of *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23; translate 'since you and all mankind are in such bitter strife.' **comme il le semble:** 'as it appears.'

211–212. **le** and **lui** both refer to **genre humain,** 210.

212. **vous ayez** should be connected with its conjunction **qu'** in 209; it is subjunctive because of the emotional idea contained in **Je m'étonne. charme:** 'enchant'; the word had a much stronger meaning than now; cf. the warning in note 195.

213–224. Contrast Philinte's attitude toward Célimène here with that in Act II, Scene iv where in her presence he takes her side against Alceste. Cf. note 693–694.

214. In reading, pause slightly after **c'est** and stress **étrange.** In translation omit **c'.**

215. 'has a liking for you.' We learn this later from Eliante's own admission, 1193–1202.

216. **prude:** Thirion in his note to 853 defines a prude as « une femme qui fait étalage d'austérité et de vertu, mais dont les actions démentent les principes. » Des Granges declares that « dans Molière le mot *prude* a un sens ironique et satirique; il désigne toujours l'affectation de la vertu. » Hence one cannot well agree with Furetière whose *Dictionnaire* of 1690 says that the word had no ironical meaning in the seventeenth century. The best answer to the meaning of the word here is a study of Arsinoé's character when she appears, although we must discount somewhat Célimène's hateful opinion of her. **vous voit d'un œil fort doux:** " casts longing eyes upon you " (Wall). See evidence of this, Act III, Scene v where for the first time Arsinoé and Alceste are alone together.

218. **ses** = Célimène. **liens** is dissyllabic. **l'** = **âme,** 217. **l'amuse:** 'plays with it,' as a cat might play with a mouse; her conduct suggests that of Philis in Oronte's sonnet, 331, which may be one of the reasons why this poem annoys Alceste so deeply.

219. **de qui = dont.** This separation of a relative pronoun from its antecedent was common at that time. **esprit médisant:** this characteristic of Célimène is thoroughly revealed in Act II, Scene v.

220. **semble:** In the 1773 and some modern editions a variant *semblent* is found. The majority of editors, however, keep the *semble* of the original edition. In the seventeenth century a verb with several subjects could agree with the last one, or with all of them considered as a unit. Translate: 'seem to conform so strongly to present-day custom.'

221–222. **d'où vient = d'où vient-il;** cf. same use, 239. The omission of *il* is another instance of Molière's freer use of syntax. **leur** and **en** refer best to **mœurs d'à présent,** 220.

pouvez: modern use would probably prefer *puissiez*, when there is any doubt in the speaker's mind but, in the seventeenth century, the indicative could be used when the thought expressed was a fact in itself.

225–226. **veuve . . . treuve:** this rhyme was possible in Molière's day because the verb *trouver* still had the forms *treuve, treuves, treuve, treuvent* in the singular and third plural. The rhyme is not alone responsible here because Molière also used *treuve* in prose (cf. *Je treuve le mariage une chose tout à fait choquante.* Scene iv of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*). Occasionally also the forms *treuver, treuvé,* and even *treuverez* are found. Although modern actors respect Molière's text, efforts were made at various times to avoid this archaic rhyme. Thus verse 226 was changed to read:

De ses défauts en moi n'affaiblit point la preuve,

an alteration ascribed to the famous actor Grandval (1710–1784). According to Auger the two verses were recited about 1820 thus:

Non, sans doute, et les torts de cette jeune veuve
Mettent cent fois le jour ma constance à l'épreuve.

This change was attributed to Voltaire.

225. **jeune:** she is twenty, according to her statements, 984, 1774. For one so young she is certainly thoroughly sophisticated. Another point of view might allege her extreme youth as an excuse for her conduct.

228. **Le premier à les voir:** from the statement we must at least admit that Alceste's love is not blind! **les . . . les = défauts,** 226.

230. **faible:** the idea that love was a weakness rather than a virtue was very common in the seventeenth century; Corneille's conception of tragedy was based upon an inferiority of love to other ideals. Cf. also **lâche,** 1377, **faiblesse,** 1382, **mon faible,** 1415 and especially 1751–1759 with the **faiblesse** of 1752, 1759; also 514–520.

Molière is said to have remarked regarding his love for his frivolous wife:

> Tout ce que j'ai de raison ne sert qu'à me faire connaître *ma faiblesse,* sans en pouvoir triompher.

231. **J'ai beau voir:** 'in vain do I see'; cf. the archaic 'well may I see.'

232. **En dépit qu'on en ait:** "do what I will" (Spencer). **On** refers to Alceste but in a way to include everybody: 'do all that any one can do.' Gache and Des Granges say the expression is equivalent to *quelque dépit qu'on en ait,* which would mean 'whatever vexation one may have from it'; the **en** refers vaguely to the previous situation. The usual modern expression is *malgré qu'on en ait.* Molière uses the same phrase in *Don Juan* (Act I, Scene i) *il faut que je lui sois fidèle, en dépit que j'en aie;* in *l'Avare* (Act III, Scene i) *Je me sens pour vous de la tendresse, en dépit que j'en aie;* in *Monsieur de Pourceaugnac* (Act II, Scene i) *Je . . . prétends le guérir en dépit qu'il en ait,* and in *Les Femmes Savantes* (1540) *D'épouser une fille, en dépit qu'elle en ait.* **elle se fait aimer,** 'I love her.'

233–234. **la plus forte** is a comparative. Giese well says here:

> These two lines show the touch of the master. The naïve hope they express reveals the true lover with his readiness to entertain illusions and to forget realities.

236. The **oui** must be pronounced quickly, to show Alceste's conviction, and also to elide the final **e** of **elle;** otherwise the verse would have one too many syllables. Such an elision is not, however, always required; cf. verse 353 of *Les Femmes Savantes.*

This verse contains the first touch of impending disaster. **The** sympathetic tone of Philinte is indicative of his disbelief in Célimène's love for Alceste. In dramatic contrast is Alceste's belief: **Oui, parbleu!**

237. **l' = aimé d'elle,** 236. This verse anticipates the outcome, for when Alceste finally learns that Célimène does not really love him, he rejects her (1779–1784). The play thus becomes one of unrequited love and to that extent is as tragic as any of Racine's tragedies since we remain convinced that Alceste can never recover from the blow.

238. **se fait paraître:** same expression in *Le Tartuffe,* 1014; today one would say *se fait connaître.*

239. 'Why then do your rivals distress you so?' **d'où vient:** cf. note 221–222. **ennui** was a much stronger word than it is now.

240–242. **C'est que = parce que.** These lines sum up well the whole plot. Alceste tries several times to carry out the purpose here expressed, but is interrupted each time until the last when he finally learns the truth. Verse 241 requires 242 to complete its meaning; such a situation is called in French versification *enjambement* and is usually avoided in classical diction. There are only a few such cases in the play; see the list in the Introduction: *Versification.*

242. **là-dessus:** i.e. the whole subject of his relationship to Célimène; he begins this in Act II, Scene i when they are alone for the first time.

243–244. Philinte carries out this thought in 1207–1212. **La cousine** is a variant in most of the earlier editions; the cousinly relationship is mentioned again, 1173, 1249, 1653.

245. **qui vous estime:** cf. note 215.

246. **était mieux votre affaire:** 'would suit you far better.'

248. This verse is perhaps the most-quoted of the play.

With Scene i the exposition is complete. It is masterly. "We know the strength and weakness of Alceste's character, and its utter incompatibility with that of the coquettish Célimène. We foresee the dangers that threaten to prevent their union and the calamities that must follow its accomplishment" (Giese). It is indeed truly remarkable that all this has been made clear in a

dialogue between only two of the characters. *Le Misanthrope* is not a play of action, but, such as there is, now begins with the entrance of Oronte.

250. **là-bas:** below on the street-floor, presumably from a servant.

252–253. **véritable . . . incroyable:** Oronte is a person given to a flattering use of superlative words, and as such at once indicates his character. The opening speech of an important personage in Molière invariably indicates his nature; note the first words of Tartuffe as a striking example.

253. **j'ai monté:** the seventeenth century employed as the auxiliary of verbs of motion *avoir* to express *an act* and *être* to express *a state;* modern use has preserved of this use only *j'ai couru*, probably because *courir* is the most active of motions. Apparently Oronte has as free access to Célimène's home as Alceste, which may account in part for the latter's aversion to him.

256. **d'être de vos amis:** 'to be numbered among your friends'; Alceste with his rigid ideas of the meaning of friendship (see 8–12) is of all men least likely to welcome Oronte's effusiveness.

258. **unisse:** subjunctive after the strong expression of emotion **je brûle,** 'I desire ardently.'

260. **pour:** supply *fait* and cf. note 60.

262. **monsieur:** note the cumulative impatience and disgust of the repetition of **monsieur,** 267, 269, 271, 276, 277. **il = discours,** 261; 'do you consider my words displeasing?'

263–264. **moi: reçoi:** eye-rhyme; *reçoi* is the older, etymological form of *reçois;* cf. **voi,** 455 and **croi,** 803, 1191. Alceste does not yet fathom the real purpose of Oronte's flattery, namely, to secure a favorable opinion of his sonnet. **l'honneur:** Alceste is here merely socially polite; despite his love of frankness, he is himself paying one of those « dehors civils que l'usage demande » (cf. 66).

265. **où je vous tiens:** 'which I have for you.'

266. **la = estime,** 265; **prétendre** is transitive only in earlier poetry, now it is intransitive and requires *à;* hence, instead of **la prétendre** we would have *y prétendre.* Cf. note 1594.

267, 269, 271, 276. With each **monsieur** Alceste tries to expostulate, but Oronte is too garrulous and Alceste cannot make any reply until 277.

270. **ce que . . .** has the value of an expression of quantity, hence **de;** cf. same construction, 862, 867, 963, 987, 1337.

y = Etat, 267; **plus** is superlative.

271. **sois-je:** note omission in the seventeenth century of a *que* before a subjunctive expressing a wish.

273. **embrasse:** particularly comic is this proposition of Oronte in view of Alceste's recent condemnation of the custom (43–48; cf. note 17–20); thus, although Oronte comes forward to embrace Alceste « avec joie, » the latter, unwilling to « payer de la même monnoie » (cf. 37–38), refuses by some gesture, and Oronte is able only to offer his hand to shake: **touchez là** (275).

274. **vous:** ethical dative emphasizing **votre.**

275. **la** anticipates **amitié.**

276. **vous y résistez?** Presumably Alceste does not even accept Oronte's proffered hand, since this might be considered as equivalent to accepting his friendship.

277. **honneur:** this is spoken with some irony and not in the same tone as the **honneur** of 264.

278–284. Alceste's high ideal of friendship corresponds to Montaigne's:

> Il faut tant de rencontre à bâtir l'amitié, que c'est beaucoup si la fortune y arrive une fois en trois siècles (*Essais* I, xxvii).

281. 'Such a compact ought to spring from judgment and selection.'

282. **avant que** and **avant que de** (952, 1769) were both possible before an infinitive; now *avant de* is required. Vaugelas, the grammarian of the seventeenth century, preferred *avant que de.*

289. 'If you need any influence to secure an opening at court.' Oronte's conceited and patronizing offer reminds us of a similar one made to Alceste later by Arsinoé (1075–1080). Acaste also makes a boast of having influence at court (802). While Oronte's boast of royal consideration is undoubtedly somewhat exaggerated, yet he is not a deceiving rascal like Dorante of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme;* Oronte is a real nobleman and has ac-

cess to the court (1507). The characters of *Le Misanthrope* are socially higher than in the remaining plays of Molière.

290–292. These verses might almost be considered as a triumphant allusion to Molière's own favor with the king, and as an expression of his gratitude therefor. **il en use . . . le plus honnêtement avecque moi:** 'he treats me with greatest distinction.' The cæsura, usually after the sixth syllable, is here necessarily after the eighth.

296. **sonnet:** a poem of fourteen verses, divided usually, as here, into two stanzas of four lines each, followed by two stanzas of three lines, or one stanza of six; the rhyme scheme may vary.

297. Oronte's conduct here reminds one of Boileau's satire of the man who is always eager to recite what he has written:

> Mais tout ce beau discours dont il vient vous flatter
> N'est rien qu'un piège adroit pour vous les réciter.
> (*Art Poétique* I, 221–222.)

Doubtless Oronte is eager to publish his sonnet in one of the *Recueils des Pièces Choisies* so numerous at that time. See mention of one by Magdelon in Scene ix of *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. A frequent contributor to such collections was l'abbé Cotin whom Molière ridicules as Trissotin in *Les Femmes Savantes*. The most celebrated collection, to which even Corneille contributed, was *La Guirlande de Julie* which the Duc de Montausier presented in 1641 to his betrothed, Julie d'Angennes, eldest daughter of the famous hostess of l'Hôtel de Rambouillet.

298. **mal propre:** 'ill-qualified.' For a long time prior to 1846 actors substituted *peu propre* here to avoid an ambiguity with *malpropre* written as one word, which means 'slovenly,' 'dirty.' Cf. 721. Now, however, the original text is respected; cf. note 225–226.

300. **qu'il ne faut** cannot well mean 'than is necessary' in view of Alceste's frank character; the meaning here is 'than is customary or conventional.'

302–303. **m'exposant = quand je m'expose;** another *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23. **pour me parler = pour que vous me parliez,** another instance of freer syntax. **trahir:** 'deceive.' **rien:** here 'anything.'

Oronte knows that Alceste is a truthful man, but his vanity will not permit him to fear an unfavorable verdict.

305. **une dame:** Célimène in the opinion of Despois-Mesnard; if Alceste has any suspicion that it is she, there is this additional explanation for his hostility. Note at least that the poem does fit Alceste's situation as well as that of Célimène's other suitors whom she constantly puts off and plays one against the other.

307–313. A truly good sonnet, which was in reality a difficult form of poetry, would not have required such a wealth of preamble.

308. After this verse in many early editions is the stage-direction: *à toutes ces interruptions il regarde Alceste.* Oronte reads his sonnet in a very vain and affected manner. Note the funny repetition of « L'espoir, » 305–309.

309, 312, 314. **verrons . . . allons voir . . . voyons:** a crescendo of irritation on Alceste's part.

310. **en** = of the sonnet.

312. **vous saurez:** 'you should realize.'

313. For such rapidity of composition cf. Mascarille's boastful words (*Précieuses Ridicules* Scene ix). Such conceit is quite in harmony with Mascarille's assertion: *Les gens de qualité savent tout, sans avoir jamais rien appris;* yet note Mascarille's failure to compose his 'impromptu' without leisure (Scene xi). Auger and Moland greatly admire Oronte's preamble, the latter declaring:

> Cette entrée en matière, ces flatteries préparatoires, ces précautions sont d'un art admirable qui n'a été égalé dans aucune littérature.

314. **le temps ne fait rien à l'affaire:** 'the time has nothing to do with the matter.' This has become a proverb; see another at 1144.

Alceste agrees with Boileau who said:

> Travaillez à loisir, quelque ordre qui vous presse.
> (*Art Poétique* I, 163.)

315–332. At the first performance, says Donneau de Visé in the letter prefixed to the original edition, some of the audience thought the sonnet excellent, and applauded; they were quite confused at Alceste's complete disapproval. This is of course

proof that such poetry was still in fashion. The poem is quite in the *précieuse* style, and it was attributed to Benserade, one of the habitués of l'Hôtel de Bouillon. However it is far more likely that Molière composed it himself.

317. **Philis:** A Greek name used also by Latin poets as a conventional appellative for a pretty, rustic maid, or sweetheart. **le triste avantage:** 'what a sorry gain.'

318. **lui = espoir,** 315.

323. The variant of the 1734 edition, *Et ne pas vous mettre,* is the modern order which does not separate *ne* from *pas.*

326. **Morbleu** is sometimes replaced in performances by *Hê quoi,* a variant of the 1682 edition.

331–335. See also **chute** in *Vocabulary.* The **chute** of such poems was some play upon words in the closing verses such as the *amarante, de ma rente* of Trissotin's silly poem in *Les Femmes Savantes.* Such jests were also called *pointes;* here the *chute* lies in the play upon **désespère** and **espère** and is very conventional. It may be rendered 'One has no hope when one must hope forever.' This play on words had been frequently used:

In *Le Roman de la Rose* (thirteenth century) we find love described as *espérance désespérée;* in Tirso de Molina's *El Burlador de Sevilla* occurs the similar *El que un bon gozar espera, Quanto espera desespera;* Ronsard (sixteenth century) defines love as

> Un désespoir où toujours on espère
> Un espérer où l'on se désespère.

Corneille has the Infante say in *Le Cid* (135):

> Ma plus douce espérance est de perdre l'espoir.

The Livet edition quotes many other such cases from Italian and Spanish poets.

In view of such frequent use of this time-worn jest we are quite ready to approve of Alceste's disgust at Philinte's extravagant approval, and even to pardon the pun based on the literal and figurative use of **chute** (335). Molière rarely indulges in punning; three other alleged cases in this play, on **affaire** (588), on **servir** (627–628) and on **fidèle** (1129–1130) are quite harmless. The

most amusing case is that on *grammaire* and *grand'mere* in *Les Femmes Savantes* (491–494).

334. **empoisonneur au diable: au diable** may be an ellipsis for *digne d'aller au diable*, or perhaps better a strong possessive: 'you devil's own poisoner', 'you devilish poisoner.' Cf. a similar use in 1473.

334–335, 338. Note the use of **ta** and **tu,** the familiar pronoun instead of **votre** and **vous,** and cf. note 1. These remarks are addressed to Philinte and the change of pronoun intensifies Alceste's anger.

342. **bel esprit:** intellectual cleverness, or wit in its larger sense. It may also designate a person possessing such qualities. Molière is unrelenting in his attacks upon the professional 'wits' of his day such as Trissotin of *Les Femmes Savantes*. **flatte** is subjunctive since **aimons** is here a verb of desire.

343. **quelqu'un:** Alceste does not become perfectly frank until 376. This avoidance of directing his criticism straight at Oronte is highly diverting since he had so strongly advocated such directness in 69–87. A similar humorous evasion occurs in *Les Femmes Savantes*, 558–614, where the hen-pecked Chrysale addresses his sister instead of his termagant wife.

We are inclined to think that this **quelqu'un** has no existence except in Alceste's imagination; such a belief makes the scene even more amusing since it convicts Alceste of a "white" lie at least.

347. **tenir la bride à:** 'hold a tight rein on'; the seventeenth century was rather fond of metaphors based upon horsemanship; **cf. manier** in 1113, also note 1729.

350. 'One risks playing a ridiculous rôle.' Cf. 1094, **jouer de fort sots personnages.**

352, 358, 362. **Je ne dis pas cela:** Yet this is practically what he *did* say in each case! The repetition of this phrase has a comical effect similar to that of « *Le pauvre homme* » in *Le Tartuffe*, « *tarte à la crême* » in *L'Ecole des Femmes*, « *sans dot* » in *L'Avare*, « *les poumons* » in *Le Malade Imaginaire*, « *qu'allait-il faire dans cette galère* » in *Les Fourberies de Scapin.* Molière may have borrowed « *Je ne dis pas cela* » from Scarron's *Le Roman Comique*, 1657, where it occurs in Book II, Chapter x in similar

droll manner in a dialogue between Destin and Madame Bouvillon (Fournel's edition I, pp. 330–331).

The severe J. J. Rousseau declared that all these *Je ne dis pas cela* were lies and unworthy of Alceste. This is, as often in Rousseau, an extreme statement; Rousseau possessed no sense of humor and, without this, no one can understand Molière. Alceste is caught in a trap, and his efforts to wriggle out are most excellent comedy.

353. **lui** here, and those in 359, 362, 373 refer to the imaginary « **quelqu'un** » of 343; likewise the **vous** and **vos** of 363–370.

354. 'that this weakness alone was enough to discredit a man.'

355–356. The two **on** refer to different persons; cf. note 56. **eût-on:** 'even if one had'; cf. note 201.

358. **pour ne point écrire = pour qu'il n'écrivît point;** another case of *anacoluthon*, the infinitive having a different subject from that of **mettais,** the main verb; cf. note 23.

360. **honnêtes gens:** cf. note 48.

361. **leur** = the **honnêtes gens,** 360, who are **gâté** by the craze to write. **ressemblerais-je:** the conditional suggests the idea 'is it possible that I resemble,' with expectation of 'no' as an answer.

364. **à vous faire imprimer:** 'to get yourself in print.'

365. **l'essor:** keep the ironical, figurative meaning 'soaring' to suggest the author's pride in his achievement; the real meaning is perhaps 'escape into the world.'

369. **de quoi que:** 'in whatever way'; 'no matter how.'

370. To the idea of an **honnête homme** previously given (note 48), Eggert, because of this passage, adds: "a man of the world, free from singularity, and, particularly, without pretensions to the status of scholars and writers."

This idea of thus abandoning one's name and attributes as an *honnête homme* may have come to Molière from a letter of J.-L. Guez de Balzac (1594–1654) to Chapelain of Nov. 23, 1637 in which the closing words strongly resemble Molière's:

> Est-il possible qu'un homme qui n'a pas appris l'art d'écrire et à qui il n'a point été fait de commandement, de par le roi et sur peine de la vie, de faire des livres, veuille *quitter son rang d'honnête homme qu'il tient dans le monde, pour aller prendre celui d'impertinent et de ridicule parmi les docteurs et les écoliers?*

372. **celui = nom,** 370.

373. J. J. Rousseau criticizes this speech also as inconsistent with Alceste's nature, again showing his failure to appreciate that Alceste is a character of comedy who has faults of his own which Molière desires to reveal.

374. 'That is all very well.'

376. **cabinet:** no other meaning than 'desk,' 'secretary,' 'closet,' 'pigeon-hole' or some similar place to hide things can be read into this word, despite the tendency of some modern audiences and critics to see another meaning totally inconsistent with Alceste's breeding. In Languedoc the word is still used in the meaning of desk, secretary or closet.

Alceste is simply saying here a trifle more vigorously what he had already said in 368, and advising Oronte to lock up his poem out of sight.

378. **naturelles** and **nature** in 388 reveal here, as everywhere in Molière's work, his hostility to any distortion of nature.

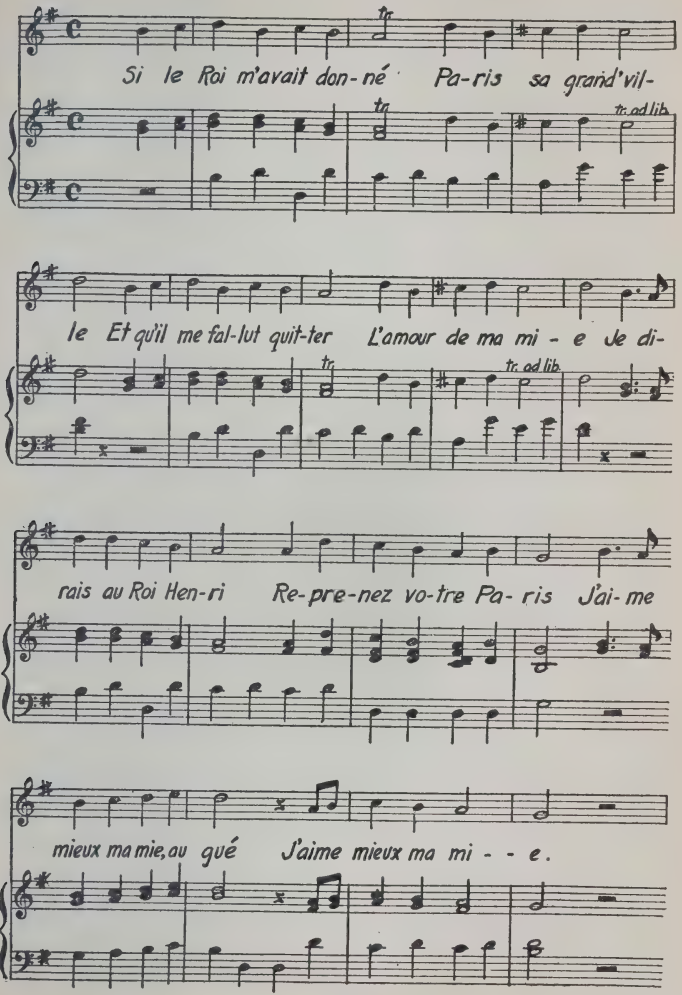
386. **sort du bon caractère:** 'is inconsistent with good taste.'

390. **tous grossiers:** 'although they were quite unpolished.' In the seventeenth century the adverbial *tout* was in agreement with the adjective or noun it modified; thus one wrote *des habits tous neufs* instead of modern *tout neufs*. Cf. other instances **toute nouvelle,** 525; **toute bonne,** 726; **toute mon amie,** 1113; **des moyens tous prêts,** 1323; **toute abandonnée,** 1418. Only in the middle of the eighteenth century did the modern rule come into universal use.

392. **vieille chanson:** in the earlier years this song was always recited (hence *dire*) and not sung, presumably because neither Molière nor Baron, who succeeded him in the rôle of Alceste, had singing voices. Later actors, possessing good voices, have sung the spirited melody, although to sing it is a departure from Molière tradition. The music [see page 143], apparently of the seventeenth century and of later origin than the words of a century earlier, is found in the Champfleury-Wekerlin collection of *Chansons populaires des Provinces de France*, page 200, where it is assigned to the Ile de France; it may also be found in *Parodies du nouveau théâtre italien*, vol. I, page 16 of *Airs notés*. A newer melody was written by the German composer Fr. Abt (see H. Schweitzer

MELODY FOR ALCESTE'S SONG

(From the Editions of Livet and Gache)



Molière und seine Bühne). Livet thinks that the *roi Henri* of 397 refers to the time of Henri II (1547–1559). No such song of that period has, however, been discovered, and the best surmise is that Molière himself adapted it from some popular ditty of southern France or Italy. One indication of an even greater age is that it is not in rhyme but in assonance, i.e. harmony of the final vowels only: *donné: quitter; ville: mie; Henri: Paris.*

The theme is a commonplace of popular poetry and resembles that of many Italian folk-songs, as for instance that quoted by D'Ancona, page 208 of *La poesia popolare italiana* (1878):

> Se il Papa mi donasse tutta Roma
> E mi dicesse: Lascia andar chi t'ama,
> Io gli direi di no, sacra Corona.

(If the Pope should give me all Rome and should say to me: "abandon her who loves thee," I should say to him: "No, O Holy Tonsure"). See also Pélissier, *Le Moliériste*, IX, 129.

We are reminded also of the song that Orsino asks the clown to sing in *Twelfth Night*, whose spirit is:

> . . . old and plain;
> The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
> And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
> Do use to chant it; it is silly sooth,
> And dallies with the innocence of love
> Like the old age.

394. **grand'ville:** cf. note 201.

395. **qu'il me fallût:** the **qu'** repeats **si** of 393, and such a construction requires the verb in the subjunctive; this rule obtains when the previous conjunction is *si, quand, lorsque*, etc.

396. **ma mie:** the word *mie* arose in mediæval times from *m'amie*, it being then possible to say *m'amie* just as one says *l'amie;* whereas today we must say *mon amie.* Since *m'amie* was used frequently in love poetry in the meaning of 'sweetheart' or 'belovèd,' the *m'a* portion of it became confused with the possessive adjective *ma*, and *mie* gradually acquired right of citizenship in the language in this specialized meaning.

397. **Henri:** Gache thinks this must be Henry IV, « le roi populaire auquel on ose parler, et le roi galant qui comprendrait ce refus. » Cf., however, Livet's opinion that Henri II is meant (note 392).

399. **ô gué:** this refrain has bothered commentators greatly. Some editions print it « au gué, » others « oh gai. » Some see in the « gué » reference to a poem by Ronsard with the refrain « La bonne aventure au gué » in which is celebrated the joy-palace of the father of Henry IV called « La Bonne Aventure » located near the Gué (= ford) -du-Loir. Others think the expression is merely a joyous exclamaton similar to the German « o je. » This latter, simpler explanation seems the more acceptable. Mediæval popular poetry has many similar refrains: avoi, hauvoi, hauvay. Laun calls attention to Béranger's frequent use of the expression in much of his poetry based upon popular tradition, as for instance:

Mais au Français attristé
Qui peut rendre la gaité
C'est la gaudriole,
Oguè.
C'est la gaudriole.

401. **rime:** as stated in note 392 it is not rhyme, but assonance.

403. **colifichets** are defined thus in Furetière's Dictionary:

Petits morceaux de papier, de carte, de parchemin, coupés proprement avec des ciseaux, représentant diverses figures ou dessins qu'on colle ensuite sur du bois, du velours, etc. Se dit aussi des petites pièces et de peu de valeur qu'on trouve dans les cabinets des pauvres curieux.

Perhaps 'trumpery' or 'tinsel' fits as well as anything.

404. A year before, in the peasant rôle of Pierrot in *Don Juan*, Molière had shown the simple naturalness of true love; here he returns to his attack upon artificiality by making a man of education and refinement his advocate.

405–412. Baron, and, following him, Molé, are said to have spoken this song with such feeling as to make audiences weep. In so doing they doubtless followed Molière's example.

414. This is the first time that Alceste objects to being laughed at; a second occurs, 681; a third, 773. In each case he is human enough not to enjoy it.

The motives of Philinte's laughter are probably complex. As a spoiled specimen of ultra-refinement he laughs at naturalness and simplicity which he no longer understands; he is also amused at Alceste's emotional appreciation of such, to him, bourgeois

sentiment; most of all, however, he sees the approach of a tense quarrel, and would avoid it by turning the whole matter into a jest (Gache).

417. No line better reveals the comic conceit of Oronte.

419–420. **en . . . d'autres . . . vôtres** all refer to **raisons,** 418.

423. 'Did nature grant you such a monopoly of intelligence,' a rather violent contrast to 294: **comme votre esprit a de grandes lumières.** The quarrel has now become sharply personal.

424. At this verse Baron, who inherited all the traditions of Molière's acting, began first to show indignation. Up to this point Alceste had been played with great nobility, dignity and delicacy, befitting the refined gentleman he is. It was Baron's purpose to win the approval of the audience to the part. Hence he avoided anything that might be considered gross or discourteous. Even here the tone is noble, yet the comedy is such that the audience for the first time is inclined to laugh *with* Alceste.

426. *se passer* requires *de* before its object: hence here **en.**

427. **pour voir:** here **voir** is probably the verb *voir*, but it may be a relic of the Old French *voir* from Latin *verum* (see many illustrations of this *voir* in Godefroy *Dictionnaire de l'ancienne langue française* VIII, pp. 284–285); the meaning would then be 'truly,' 'actually.' See the same expression in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act III, Scene iii, and notes **25,** 13, **35,** 1, **35,** 30, of our edition of that play (Ginn & Co.). Also *La Princesse d'Elide*, Act IV, Scene i:

> Devinez, *pour voir*, et nommez quelqu'un.

Cf. further Livet, *Lexique de la langue de Molière*, III, pp. 809–810; also Littré's *Dictionnaire* under *voir* (26). The Despois-Mesnard *Lexique* (Vol. XIII, p. 613), however, lists this *pour voir* under the verb « voir: *emplois divers.* »

428–430. **en** and **les** = **vers,** 424.

428. **composassiez:** these sibilant forms of the imperfect subjunctive are now avoided as affected; they were, however, long used and considered elegant.

429. **en:** for position cf. note 16.

433–434. **petit . . . grand:** here we probably have a reference to the statures of the actors. Molière, as Alceste, was rather

short; Du Croisy, as Oronte, was taller. Molière was rather fond of making allusion to the physical appearance of his actors. Jodelet's pallor is touched upon in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (Scene ix); Louis Béjart's lameness finds expression in the *ce chien de boiteux-là* of *L'Avare* (Act I, Scene iii); the height of De Brie is depicted in the phrase *grand cheval de carrosse*, applied to the fencing master of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme;* he in turn ridicules the dancing and music masters as *petit* (*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act II, Scene iii).

mon: adds a touch of bitterness and contempt. Note that it is Oronte who starts this personal allusion.

433. To keep the verse twelve-syllabled the **le** must be elided on the **un.** See another similar necessity in « faites-le entrer », 748 and compare the « elle. Oui » of 236. Such elisions were permitted in comedy, but were generally avoided in tragic verse; yet see an instance in Racine's *La Thébaïde*, 814 and two instances in Voltaire's *Mérope*, 1048, 1091.

prenez-le un peu moins haut: 'soften your tone somewhat' (Eggert).

436–438. **j'ai tort:** this is not genuine, for Oronte's appeal to the Marshalls' Court proves the contrary; nor are the words **valet** and **serviteur** to be taken in any but the most formal manner. The two men are now completely estranged, and Oronte carries his animosity even beyond the decision of the court; see 1505–1516.

439. **pour:** cf. note 120–121.

440. **affaire:** Philinte realizes that this is not the end of the matter, and that Oronte will appeal to the authorities constituted to settle disputes between noblemen (see Act II, Scene vi). **sur les bras:** cf. 1576.

442–446. Note how cleverly Molière can split up the so-called cumbersome Alexandrine verse into spirited dialogue. See other instances, 552–554; 1436–1446.

442. **plus de société:** 'no more dealings with you.'

443. **point de langage:** 'not another word.'

444. **quoi** may be either simple *quoi*, indicative of amazement, or a part of *quoique* 'although,' or even of *quoi que* 'whatever'; we cannot be certain because of the interruption.

445. **c'en est trop:** 'that is too much'; Alceste is thoroughly indignant at Philinte's intimation in « **on outrage** » that he is to blame.

446. 'you are jesting with me. I shall not leave you.' Philinte is ever Alceste's best friend; cf. his words at the end of the play, 1807–1808. He knows Alceste's good qualities as well as his defects, and feels bound not to leave him to himself in this crisis. Alceste later meets Célimène who had gone out shopping (250); he escorts her home and Act II begins when they return. Thus the unity of time is rigorously followed.

ACT II

A striking traditional feature of Célimène's rôle is the very effective use of the fan which she carries. It is extraordinary how expressive a fan can be.

447–448. **Madame** was the title of unmarried as well as married women of the higher classes. Inversely, « mademoiselle » was applied to unmarried and married women of the bourgeoisie. Hence Molière's wife was always called « Mademoiselle Molière ».

net: satisfait: for the rhyme cf. note 63–64. As Act I ended in a masculine rhyme, **pas: pas,** we should, strictly speaking, have a feminine rhyme (one ending in mute *e*) in the first couplet of Act II. Molière disregarded this rule, which Corneille had established, in three other instances: between Acts I and II of *L'Etourdi*, between Acts I and II and also between Acts II and III of *Le Dépit Amoureux*.

449. **cœur** and **bile** are used figuratively; otherwise we should have a curious physiology even for the seventeenth century! Translate 'I cannot restrain my indignation at your conduct.' Of note is the number of times Alceste uses **cœur** or **mon cœur** in this short scene of 84 verses: **mon cœur,** 449, 460, 504, 515; **cœur,** 466, 470, 518, 531; this is an indication of his deep seriousness. Contrast therewith the flippancy of Célimène.

450. **ensemble** merely emphasizes **nous,** so that its meaning is almost 'apart,' 'asunder.' Molière uses *ensemble* even with a singular in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act III, Scene ix: « Je

veux contre elle conserver mon ressentiment, et rompre *ensemble* tout commerce. »

451. **oui:** probably in answer to some gesture of surprise from Célimène. **de parler = si je parlais** or **en parlant.**

452. **tôt ou tard:** positives yet we must render them as comparatives: 'sooner or later.' **indubitablement:** Molière in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* made fun of the fondness of the *précieuses* for long adverbs; this is apparently his only use of this word.

454. **que** = here **lorsque** or **tandis que** (Genin: *Lexique de la langue de Molière*). Cf. *L'Avare*, III, v: « Comment voudriez-vous qu'ils traînassent un carrosse, *qu*'ils ne peuvent pas se traîner eux-mêmes? » and *Amphitryon*, III, viii: « Et la raison bien souvent les pardonne, *que* l'honneur et l'amour ne les pardonnent pas. »

455–456. **voi: moi: voi** is an older form of *vois;* cf. note 263–264.

456. **ramener:** 'escort.' Cf. note 446.

459. **amants:** hardly more than 'suitor.' « Le mot « amant » n'a pas la signification qu'on lui donne souvent à tort aujourd'hui; il désigne un être qui aime passionnément quelqu'un ou quelque-chose. On est l'amant d'une femme comme on peut l'être de la gloire ou de la liberté. » (Duflos)

463. **font de doux efforts:** 'take such pleasant pains.' The language of both participants in the first part of this scene has much *précieuse* affectation; cf. especially 467–472: **appas; sa douceur; achève sur les cœurs; le trop riant espoir.** One suspects that much of this is ironical on Alceste's part in ridicule of the generally affected type of Célimène's admirers. However, it is true that many expressions of the *précieuses* had become part and parcel of everyday use, and not even Molière could avoid them, and still say effectively what he wished.

469. **sa = accueil,** 468. **vous rend les armes** = 'surrenders to you'; military metaphors were then popular.

473. "A somewhat less promiscuous affability on your part" (Spencer). The whole verse, not **complaisance** alone, is the subject of **chasserait,** 474.

474. **cohue** is an exaggeration. At most Célimène has five suitors that we learn about, to judge by her letters in Act V.

476. **votre** is sarcastic. **heur** was almost an obsolete word even in poetry and was completely so in prose; Richelet in 1780 characterized it as « bas et peu usité »; it still exists in the archaic, antithetical expression *heur et malheur*, and in compounds like *bonheur*, *heureux*, etc. Confusion with *heure* may have caused its disappearance. Molière helped prolong its life.

To judge by the long description of Clitandre, this fop gives Alceste the most anxiety of all his rivals. Yet it is Acaste to whom Molière gives the more careful portraiture (Act III, Scene i). The suggestion has been made that Molière in this picture of Clitandre is attacking in a veiled way the Comte de Guiche, one of the admirers of his wife.

479. **ongle long . . . au petit doigt:** the custom of having long finger nails seems to have come from the orient where it is still prevalent. This practice is still sometimes seen in ultra-fashionable European circles where it seems to have the purpose of emphasizing that a person is of the leisure class. In Molière's day this fashion was quite common, having come down from the earlier years of the reign of Louis XIII. Although both index fingers were also thus favored, it was more particularly the left little finger that received this care. Among the various reasons for this practice is that stated by Edouard Fournier in his *Roman de Molière*, 1862, to the effect that the long nail was for the purpose of scratching gently at doors, knocking being considered vulgar! Other uses are said to have been to scratch more easily in the ear, and even to pass salt to ladies at table! Scratching at doors was also effected by the dandies of the day with the combs which were carried and used publicly to arrange the large wigs then in fashion. In general the hands, which the *précieuses* called *les belles mouvantes*, received a great deal of attention in aristocratic circles. At one time actors substituted for this line:

Est-ce par *le brillant* qu'il porte au petit doigt,

probably because of the passing of the custom of a long nail.

480. **l'on** is used instead of **on** to avoid the hiatus of **où on;** the following **le,** however, creates an unpleasing combination that is usually avoided. Molière does not seem to mind it; perhaps

he liked the humorous effect which is sometimes found in folk poetry:

Ingrate, belle ingrate,
Vous m'avez l'on la la
Vous m'avez l'on la lé
Vous m'avez laissé là

In verse 1069 is a similar case: **Madame, l'on loue . . .**

481–485. A still longer passage ridiculing prevailing fashions is in *L'Ecole des Maris* (23–38); see also the elaborate commentary thereon in the Despois-Mesnard edition, Vol. II, pp. 77, 358–361.

482. **blonde** was ever the favorite color of romantic heroes, witness Homer's "blond Menelaus." Blond wigs, long and curly, were worn by the fashionable youth of the day to such a degree that the word *blondin* meant a fop or ladies' man; Richelet defines this word as « jeune homme à cheveux blonds; galant à perruque blonde. » See the words *perruque* and *blondin* in Livet's *Lexique.*

483. **canons,** in English 'canons,' 'knee-cuffs' or 'rollers,' were flounces of fine linen, silk, or even cloth, heavily starched, and usually elaborately edged with a lace that matched the lace at the neck. They were worn below the knee and sometimes extended above it. It is said that their use came into fashion through some aristocrat who wished to hide the fact that he was knock-kneed and bowlegged! Canons were attached usually to the breeches, occasionally to the stockings; they could extend half way down the leg and half way up the thigh. Dandies took great pride in the size and costliness of their canons; see Mascarille's boast in *Les Précieuses Ridicules,* Scene x:

Je puis me vanter qu'ils ont un quartier de plus que tous ceux qu'on fait.

The costume of Clitandre is the most exaggerated of all. He wears the largest **canons,** and his cloak is the longest.

484. **L'amas de ses rubans:** young fops had sometimes as much as three hundred yards of different ribbons on their wardrobe, and they even beribboned their horses and coaches. Ribbons were worn at the neck, on the sleeves, the knees, the shoes, in fact everywhere they could be attached. Harpagon ridicules his son's ribbons thus (*L'Avare,* Act I, Scene x):

Je voudrais bien savoir à quoi servent tous ces rubans dont vous voilà lardé depuis les pieds jusqu'à la tête.

485. **rhingrave:** very full, wide knee-breeches which were attached by ribbons to the stockings; they were so called because a 'Rheingraf' or prince from the Rhine country, a certain Frédéric de Neuviller, had introduced them into France about 1658. This nobleman, formerly governor of Maestricht, had estates in France and came to live upon them in 1657–1658. The rhingrave were usually worn for horseback-riding.

486. **faisant:** perhaps for *se faisant;* Molière occasionally omits a reflexive pronoun; cf. **arrêter** for **vous arrêter,** 1031. *faire* may, however, be used in the meaning of 'pretending to be,' 'acting.'

490–491. **procès:** Gache remarks that there are few plays of the period without a lawsuit; here we have two. Contrast, however, with Célimène's attitude, that of Alceste toward his lawsuit, 184–205 and 123–144.

492. 'all the friends he has.'

499–500. **auriez . . . voyiez:** the **ie** counts only as one syllable; so also in **feriez,** 948; similarly the **ions** counts as one in **continuions,** 970, **prenions,** 971 and the **iais** as one in **biais,** 1351. Yet in **devriez,** 14, the **ie** counts as two syllables; cf. note 14. Compare also note 193.

500. **la** = **complaisance,** 498.

502. 'What have I more than they all, madam, I pray?'

503. This statement of Célimène should be carefully noted in view of what happens. From her it means little or nothing. Observe also that it is in the passive voice. In any event she wishes to make Alceste believe that she loves him. Cf. note 1392.

504. **a:** the first edition has the preposition **à** here; hence Despois-Mesnard, followed by many modern editors, accept *à*. However, all the other earlier editions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have the verb form, which is preferred by about an equal number of modern scholars. One is in equally good company with either reading. If one accepts the preposition **à,** it must be in the unusual meaning of modern *pour*.

505–506. There is a certain amount of the *précieuse* manner about Célimène in her desire to avoid the direct issue of marriage.

See her other reply to Alceste, 1400–1410 and her remarks to Alceste and Oronte, 1629–1635.

505. **ayant pris le soin:** 'having gone to the trouble.' **ayant** is used absolutely, not having any connection with **aveu** the subject of the clause in which it stands; its real connection is with **je pense;** another *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23.

508. She has been doing this very thing; see Act V, Scene iv.

509. **fleurette:** literally 'little flower'; figuratively 'love-speech,' 'pretty compliment,' a meaning that dates from about 1654. Commines has the verb *fleuretter,* in which some see the origin of English *to flirt;* Darmesteter-Hatzfeld-Thomas does not agree, however.

510. 'And you make me out a nice person indeed.' Célimène here actually passes judgment on herself as a flirt, as events show. **de** for modern **en** which would have made hiatus with **là.**

511. Corneille used several times *ôter quelqu'un de souci.*

512. **se dédire de** = 'to retract.' Critics vary as to whether this retraction includes what she said in 503. Note another case of rapid shifting of what she has just said, 1365 ff., followed by the opposite shift a moment later. Surely she is a shifty, wriggly character without moral courage to face the truth.

513. **que:** 'except.' Maurice Souriau (*L'Evolution du vers français au XVII^e siècle,* pp. 351–352) says of this passage, especially 513, that it lacks clearness; while admitting his uncertainty, he interprets it thus: « Puisque je vous ai détrompé, maintenant si vous vous trompez encore, ce sera votre faute et non la mienne. »

514–520. Compare note 230.

514. **Morbleu:** cf. note 25. **faut-il que je:** 'why must I?'

515. Construe **que** with the following verse: 'how I shall bless . . .'

518. Leys quotes Génin here:

> Molière le premier d'après sa triste experience, a peint l'amour comme une faiblesse d'un grand cœur.

523. Note peculiar structure of this verse with main cæsura after **concevoir** at the ninth syllable and with enjambement of **jamais** over to 524. The effect is admirable for **jamais** receives

the greatest possible stress as Molière intended. Cf. last part of note 240–242.

For position of **se** cf. note 16.

528. The unusual position of **jamais** brings it emphatically in the cæsura and avoids hiatus of **vu** with **un.** *amant* for **amour** in the 1674, 1682, 1734 editions, and in Duflos, who says that *ami* is substituted in performances.

529. **son = amour,** 528. **ne passe:** the **ne** is normal after an idea of hindrance; Alceste means that Célimène prevents his 'chagrin' from disappearing.

530. **coupons chemin à = coupons court à,** 'let us cut short, or cease.'

531. **voyons d'arrêter: de** for normal **à** which would have made hiatus with **arrêter.** A great many verbs in the seventeenth century had *de* to introduce their subordinate infinitives, but now have *à*, such as *aimer*, *exhorter*, *se préparer*, *enseigner*, etc. (see Haase, *Syntaxe*, pp. 112 ff.).

The thought is interrupted but is clear: 'let us see if we can put a stop to . . . [our differences].' This is the first of the interruptions, all welcomed or engineered by Célimène, which prevent Alceste from reaching the understanding which he so much desires. See others at 551, 776, 1035, 1435, 1652. It would be possible for Célimène to avoid these interruptions, had she wished, but she welcomes them as an escape from her embarrassment.

532. **Acaste:** it seems rather familiar of Basque to announce him so unceremoniously; cf. similar announcing of Clitandre, 552. Basque is plainly a valet « de comédie. » However this informal method shows that they were frequent visitors, and Célimène's « Eh bien » implies reproof that Acaste was not admitted immediately to her presence. Cf. last part of note 531.

535. **de tous** is really pleonastic. Pleonasms were more common at the beginning than at the end of the seventeenth century; cf. Corneille's « mon *plus* unique bien, » and Regnier's « tout le mond *entier*. »

536. **de n'être pas chez vous:** i.e. 'to deny yourself to visitors.' It is humorous to see Alceste, "the apostle of absolute honesty," advocating in his own interest the polite social lie that she is not at home.

538. **regards** of the 1666 edition was changed to *égards* in those of 1682 and 1734, because it had ceased to mean 'considerations.' The French replaced also *au regard de* with *à l'égard de;* cf. English retention of the older phrase 'in regard to.'

539. Note emphatic position of **jamais** in the cæsura, and cf. notes 523, 528.

541. 'And what is all that to you that you must so embarrass yourself?'

de sorte for *de la sorte*, probably because of the metre.

544. **ont gagné = gagner le privilège.**

548. **brailleurs:** 'brawlers,' 'loud-mouthed persons'; the word may be associated with *braire*, to bray. The alliteration with **brouiller** was doubtless designed to secure emphasis. Célimène is quite fond of such rather vulgar expressions as « **brailleurs,** » especially when she is showing off her wit in Scene v of this act. Note the following: **il se barbouille fort,** 571; **il faut suer sans cesse,** 606; **qu'elle grouille aussi peu qu'une pièce de bois,** 616; **pour accrocher quelqu'un,** 856; **de me dire au nez,** 1358; **cracher dans un puits pour faire des ronds,** 1690, 12. One wonders how far the language of Molière's wife, who was of common origin, influenced him here. Was she the prototype of Célimène in speech also? To all this might be added the crudeness and cruelty of her gossipy portraits in Scene v.

549. **sur quoi qu'on se fonde:** 'however one may argue.'

552–554. Cf. note 442–446.

552. **encor** would suggest that Clitandre had already called once that day; it is Alceste's second visit; because of the unities of time and place each of the characters is obliged to multiply his calls in a remarkably hospitable manner. A stage-direction in some editions inserted after **Alceste** reads: « *Il témoigne s'en vouloir aller* »; for position of this *s'en* see note 16.

justement: 'exactly as I said'; Alceste may also wish to indicate that Alceste and Clitandre are inseparable, where one goes the other follows.

553. **pour quoi faire:** 'for what purpose?'

554, 556. **je le veux:** despite all her fickleness Célimène has a strong will; she is not emotional, but controls herself far better than the excitable and temperamental Alceste. This explains

her mastery over him and in part her fascination for him. This scene is the first instance of the exercise of her control.

554. **point d'affaire:** 'no, no, I'll not stay,' but he does!

555. **ennuyer** was much stronger in meaning then than now; and closer to its etymon *odium*, 'hate'; hence 'I find such conversations odious (or hateful).'

556. **essuyer,** literally 'wipe off,' figuratively 'endure'; from the idea of being forced to wipe off, hence endure without redress, the spattered mud of a passing carriage.

558. **il vous est tout loisible** is a very formal phrase admirably suited to show her coolness and complete self-control; its very chilliness is a further exasperation to Alceste.

559. **qui montent:** 'coming up'; a short relative clause is best rendered by our present participle.

559–742. The long scene that now follows is generally known as « la scène des portraits, » sometimes also as « la scène des chaises » because the actors sit almost the whole time. Features of the scene were used by Sheridan in *The School for Scandal*. The fashion of these brief word-pictures, or *portraits*, as they were called (cf. note 81), started apparently with the romances of Mlle de Scudéry who depicted under fictitious names her most illustrious contemporaries. Mlle de Montpensier encouraged the fashion by publishing at the end of her memoirs a whole gallery of such *portraits*. They became a favorite exercise of the wits of the day and ultimately the practice became ridiculous; it was made fun of by Sorel in his pamphlet *Description de l'Ile de Portraiture et de la Ville des Portraits*. In La Bruyère's *Les Caractères* are many sketches that closely resemble those of *Le Misanthrope*.

Note that it is Célimène who furnishes most of the *portraits* of this scene, and add to these her pictures of her suitors found in her letters of Act V, Scene iv.

560. For position of **vous l'** cf. note 16.

561. **sorti:** assumed surprise, for she has probably not taken her eyes off him. Molière has similar humorous scenes of a lover remaining to watch his rivals; cf. particularly *Le Dépit Amoureux*, Act IV, Scene viii.

562. **faire expliquer** for **faire s'expliquer.** This omission of

se still exists in such phrases as *faire taire* for *faire se taire.* Note **vous vous expliquerez** in 563.

563. **aujourd'hui:** classical French dramatists often feel it necessary to indicate their adherence to the twenty-four hour unity of time. Note in this connection Clitandre's reference to having been to the king's **levé** (567) and of his intention to be present at the **petit couché,** (739), both on the same day (738); cf. also notes 1340, 1480. Note the strong futures, 563, 564, 565, 566, indicative of Alceste's firm resolve. Célimène is equally determined not to be forced to any decision.

566. **c'est trop de patience:** 'my patience is exhausted.' During the scene Alceste, until he speaks, 651, shows his great irritation fingering his lace collar, his wig, his ribbons, and tapping nervously with his foot.

567. **levé** is usually spelled *lever;* there was much ceremony about the king's rising and being dressed; to his bedchamber were admitted only the greatest nobles; this was called *le petit lever.* When the king was ready to receive the rest of the court, he left his private apartment and held *le grand lever.* Inversely the *grand coucher* was before the whole court and *le petit coucher* was restricted to a favored few. Note that Clitandre declares (739) his expectation to be present at this ceremony, although we are not obliged to believe him. The details of these various ceremonies may be found in Taine's *Origines de la France contemporaine;* Livet's edition also has a long description; these ceremonies occupy twenty pages of *L'Etat de France* published in 1698! The highest nobles were eager to perform the most abject menial services for the king on these occasions:

> L'honneur d'être témoin de la toilette royale dont les moindres détails étaient réglés par une étiquette sévère, était des plus recherchés.

A relic of the word *lever* is found in the levee or the reception of English royalty.

568. **ridicule achevé:** 'complete fool'; for **ridicule** cf. note 108.

569. **pût:** today **puisse.**

571. **se barbouille:** 'acts the clown' or 'very strangely,' from the idea of daubing up one's face, as do clowns; this meaning is clear from a definition of the word in Act III, Scene ii of Dan-

court's *Le Chevalier à la mode* (1687). Furetière paraphrases the latter part of this verse with « on n'en fait guère d'état, » i.e. 'he is esteemed but slightly'; this hardly seems strong enough. Cf. note 548.

572. **saute aux yeux d'abord:** 'strikes the attention immediately.'

574. A verse with two cæsuræ, it being divided into three parts of four syllables each; hence the name 'ternary'; cf. others, 791, 1708.

575. ***des* gens** in the 1674, 1682, 1734 editions, a variant rejected by the vast majority of editors.

577. **ne vous déplaise:** cf. note 75.

578. **chaise:** the Sedan chairs carried by porters came into general use about 1650; at first they were not enclosed; in 1637 an enclosed type was brought from England and this style replaced all others; the *Loix de la galanterie* of 1644 refers to the enclosed type as « dernière et nouvelle commodité. » Livet's edition gives here a long note on the history of these *chaises à porteurs*.

582. Cf. the portrait of *Acis* in La Bruyère *De la Société et de la Conversation*, V, 7.

585. **bon caractère:** ironical; 'funny fellow.'

585–594. **Timante** is thought by commentators to be the eccentric and ridiculous Comte de Saint-Gilles, laughed at by the whole court. Although he was very fond of Molière, the latter and La Fontaine were dreadfully bored by him, and had indeed quarreled with him. Gombault wrote wittily:

> Gilles veut faire voir qu'il a bien des affaires;
> On le trouve partout, dans la presse, à l'écart;
> Mais ses voyages sont des erreurs volontaires;
> Quoiqu'il aille toujours, il ne va nulle part.

Boileau said of him:

> Saint-Gilles était un homme fort mystérieux qui ne parlait jamais que tout bas et à l'oreille, quelque chose qu'il eut à dire.

He was the original of La Bruyère's Théodote (*De la cour*, 61):

> Théodote est mystérieux . . . il s'approche de vous et il vous dit à l'oreille: Voilà un beau temps; voilà un grand dégel. . . .

Johann Elias Schlegel built his comedy *Der Geheimnissvolle* about this character of Saint-Gilles.

588. Note the play in words, and cf. last paragraph of note 331–335.

589. **Tout ce qu'il vous débite:** "all his small talk" (Joynes).

590. **A force de façons:** "by his ceremonious affectations" (Spencer).

596. **sortir du grand seigneur:** 'talk of any one except great lords.'

601. **il tutaye:** an older form of *tutoie*, preferred by all the best French editions. *Tutoyer* dates only from the seventeenth century and existed in a softer form *tuteyer* also; the latter form was preferred because of the harshness of *tu . . . toi* coming together. It should also be recalled that the pronunciation of *oi* at that time was *oué*. Molière wrote *tutaye* in ridicule of the pronunciation of the court fops.

This custom of 'theeing' and 'thouing' people, made fashionable for a time by the *précieuses* (along with such expressions as *mon cher* and *ma chère*), came under royal disapproval and was discarded as too familiar. Hence Molière is able to ridicule it here. Note in this connection the use of *tu* and *toi* by the fops Acaste and Clitandre when they are alone in Scene i of Act III.

602. **monsieur:** in polite conversation **monsieur** should be prefixed to a man's name; hence if Géralde omitted it, he was unduly familiar. In view of 598–599, **monsieur** might also mean 'plain sir.'

603. Bélise is probably a shortened anagram of Isabelle; there is a most humorous old maid Bélise in *Les Femmes Savantes*. **du dernier bien:** equivalent to **fort bien** of 823, 'on the best of terms'; for **dernier** cf. note 18.

604. **Le pauvre esprit de femme:** 'the poor stupid woman.'

604–608. **sec entretien; la stérilité de sa conversation; fait mourir . . . la conversation:** more *précieuse* expressions that had become current; Célimène is not a *précieuse* and there is no intention to ridicule her language here. **suer:** a coarse but vivid word; cf. note 548.

609. **attaquer son stupide silence:** another vivid phrase suggestive of using artillery to reduce a fortress.

610. **prenez l'assistance:** today the article is dropped in such phrases as *prendre la vengeance; faire la retraite; prendre l'assistance*, etc.

611–615. Note the long, drawn-out effect of the three **et** of 611 and the two of 615, which is increased by **une** of 614; today the expression is *traîner en longueur*. 614 may be rendered 'drags its fearful length along.' **bâille vingt fois:** a pardonable exaggeration. Célimène well knows how to get a laugh.

616. **grouille aussi peu** is changed in the 1682 and 1734 editions to *s'émeut autant*, and **grouille** to *se meut* in that of 1692. The word *grouiller* is marked 'bas' in the first *Dictionnaire de l'Académie;* it was a rather vulgar word in Molière's day also. He uses it twice in *Don Juan* (1665), once in *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, (1670) and once again in *La Comtesse d'Escarbagnas* (1671). In all these cases, however, it is spoken by persons of far lower social status than Célimène. We have, therefore, another example of her preference for the crass word when it is more expressive. Cf. note 548.

617. **Que vous semble:** ellipsis for *que vous semble-t-il?* 'What do you think?'

621. **emploi:** a temporary appointment. **charge:** a permanent position, civil or military. **bénéfice:** an ecclesiastical post, a living.

625. 'he has acquired esteem because of his cook.'

626. **à qui** should really be either *à laquelle* or *que*, since *qui* may refer only to persons. Here the effect is to make **sa table** a more important personality than the host Cléon. However, in other cases Molière showed his freedom from this rule; see 1502, 1676; cf. **que** for **à qui,** 261.

628. **se servît:** 'dish himself up,' play on words with **servir,** 627; cf. last paragraph of note 331–335.

629. Cf. note 58.

636. **de bons mots** would now be *des bons mots*, the adjective having combined to make with **mots** a compound noun meaning 'witticisms.' The same is true of **du bon goût,** 791.

se fatigue for **se travaille** is an unacceptable variant of 1682; *se travailler* was used by J. J. Rousseau, and is still good French.

640. **n'est pas d'un bel esprit:** 'is not the function of a clever man.'

641. Cf. note 58. **trouver à redire:** 'to find something to criticize.'

645–646. **conversations . . . propos:** evidently a contrast is intended; **conversation** means the more serious entertainment which the age practiced as a sort of art; **propos** would then merely mean talk of a lighter, even frivolous type.

649. **Dieu me damne:** 'May God punish me,' or merely "By Jove" (Giese). A literal translation of **damne** by the English cognate would be a serious error, for certainly no French gentleman of the seventeenth century would so express himself before ladies.

650. Is Molière slyly complimenting himself here?

651. **allons, ferme, poussez:** 'come on, steady now, thrust in'; the last two are fencing terms. In *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* is the same use of *pousser:* « *Pousse*, mon cher marquis, *pousse* » (Scene vii). **de cour:** i.e. false. Alceste may have special reference to the fact that Célimène has just attacked one of her « amis » (632).

652. **en:** 'anybody.'

654–656. Cf. 17–20 and 41–47, also especially 873–876 where Célimène will do this very thing to Arsinoé whom she has just attacked viciously.

662. **encens:** cf. 1097 where Célimène is meant also.

663. **à railler** follows **appas.**

664. Alceste strikes truly here. Célimène slanders more in vanity at her skill therein than in real meanness. La Rochefoucauld has:

On est d'ordinaire plus médisant par vanité que par malice (*Les Maximes* No. 483).

665–666. **se prendre à = s'en prendre à,** 'to blame.'

667. ellipsis of *témoigner* after **pourquoi.**

669–680. The sting of Célimène's words is increased by her ironical use of « monsieur » with all pronouns in the third person.

669. **bien** adds ironical strength.

673. Supply *fait* before **pour,** and cf. note 60.

676. The subjunctive **fût** adds to the impossibility.

680. In these portraits, of which this is the last, **Célimène** has given us also an excellent picture of her own vain, shallow and selfish nature in harmony with the scriptural "Judge not that ye be not judged."

685–686. **lui-même** and the two **il** refer to **esprit,** 683. **chagrin:** cf. note 6. Célimène refers later to Alceste's **chagrin bourru** (1690, 23).

690. **loueurs impertinents:** 'untimely flatterers' who praise when they should not. Leys says here:

> Pendant cette scène, Alceste était resté un peu dans l'ombre; il reparaît ici tout entier, avec la haute opinion qu'il a de lui-même et le dédain qu'il éprouve pour les autres.

691. **quand j'en devrais mourir:** 'even if I must die for it.'

693–694. Another case of **on** referring to different persons (cf. note 56); the first seems to refer to the other men present, although some think Philinte is meant more especially; the second **on** refers unquestionably to Philinte who in 213–224 had severely blamed Célimène. The second **on** might well be accompanied by a meaning look at Philinte, although there is no such stage-direction. Cf. note 213–224. **nourrir:** Alceste had used the same word, 661.

695. **avouerai:** the mute **e** does not count as a syllable; cf. note 193.

699. **m'en cacher:** 'to hide away from them,' i.e. 'to overlook them'; the **en** refers to **défauts,** 698. The infinitive phrase belongs after **que,** 700.

700. **de les lui reprocher** literally 'to reproach them to her,' i.e. 'to reproach her with them.' Note now 231 « j'ai beau l'en blâmer.»

702. **A . . . pardonner:** today we would use either a participle with *en* or a clause with *quand, lorsque, si,* etc. Cf. 86, 1036. Corneille has:

> Ma tristesse redouble *à la tenir* secrète (*La Cid,* 78).

707. 'If hearts must obey you in such matters.'

709. 'find the supreme ideal of perfect love.'

710. **A bien injurier:** 'in heaping insults upon.'

711–730. This passage, which always evokes much applause, is in part a paraphrase of verses 1149–1169 of Book IV of *De rerum natura* by Lucretius. In his youth Molière, then the pupil of Gassendi, had made a translation, upon which his verses here may be based. However, as his translation was lost, it is more probable that he used the version by Marolles. Boully's edition of *Le Misanthrope* contains both the Latin and Marolles' translation. A comparison reveals the superior grace and cleverness of Molière's version which has indulgently tempered the haughty harshness of the original Latin. The thoughts may have originated in Plato's *Republic* (Dialogue V), and are found in other ancient writers. Livet quotes other adaptations of the passage by Lucretius in Faret's excellent book *L'Honnête Homme* (1640), p. 142, in Scarron's *Jodelet Duelliste* (1652) Act I, Scene i, and in Mlle de Scudéry's *Le Grand Cyrus* (1648), pp. 508–509. Possibly these may have influenced Molière to introduce such a passage here. Rigal thinks that he was also inspired by a Spanish version. In a later passage, 1259–1268, Eliante will again demonstrate her sound common sense in matters of love.

711. **peu fait:** 'little subject.'

716. **y = défauts,** 715, although it might refer to **objet aimé,** 714.

717. **jasmin:** the white jessamine is common in southern Europe.

718. **la noire à faire peur:** 'the girl so dark as to frighten one.'

721. **malpropre** as one word usually means 'slovenly,' 'dirty'; as two words 'ill-fitted' (see note 298). Here, because of **sur soi,** the meaning is 'ill-dressed,' 'untidy.' **sur soi:** 'as to her person.'

730. Note **aime** at both ends of the verse, also **amant,** 729. This repetition of the idea of love stresses the main thought of the passage effectively. A later variant *amour* for **ardeur,** 729 seems, therefore, unwise.

736. **je ne sors:** this declaration becomes humorous when Alceste is summoned a moment later and has to go. Three **que** in one verse seem harsh, but such use was not uncommon at that time. Cf. note 79. **sors:** vigorous present for *sortirai.*

737. **A moins de voir:** 'unless I perceive.'

738, 740. Note the idle life of these courtiers who apparently have nothing whatever to do except to call on ladies and be at court.

738. **de toute la journée:** 'all day long'; cf. note 563.

739. **petit couché:** cf. note 567. *coucher* was the preferred spelling.

741. **C'est pour rire:** 'you must be jesting.'

742. For use of **que** and **qui** so close together cf. notes 79, 186. Translate **qui sorte** simply 'to leave.'

743. **un homme** is Basque's crude, ignorant way of announcing the officer in the uniform (746–747) of a lieutenant attached to the Marshalls' Court. Alceste will address him with proper respect as « monsieur » (749). This court, comprising the marshalls of France, over whom presided the ranking officer, settled quarrels and points of honor between noblemen and officers, in order to prevent their resorting to duels which were severely punished. See Despois-Mesnard V. notes to pp. 490–492.

744. **affaire:** note omission of *une* which would now be necessary. Cf. similar omission of *des* before **vices,** 174.

746. **grand'basques:** cf. note 201.

747. **du d'or** is peasant dialect for **de l'or.** Same expression used by the peasant Pierrot in *Don Juan*, Act II, Scene i. The uneducated confused *or* with *d'or* and thus was created the verb *dorer*, to gild. Basque is trying to describe the *hoqueton* (English 'hacqueton') worn by the officer; probably he had never seen one before. It was a short, embroidered coat with long flaps, adorned with gold braid.

748. **faites-le entrer:** concerning elision of **le** on **entrer** cf. note 433. Similar case in *Le Tartuffe* (1115):

> . . . Laissez-*le en* paix. S'il faut, à deux genoux,

Qu'est-ce donc qu'il vous plaît?: 'What is your pleasure?' **qu'il** for modern *qui;* other cases, 1368, 1555.

751. **dont j'ai commandement:** 'whose orders I bring.'

752. 'summon you to appear at once before them.' The Marshalls' Court held its sessions in the Palais de Justice. It had been created by an edict of 1651 which had confirmed previous laws promulgated against duelling in 1566, 1609, 1643. In the

brief reign of Henry IV over seven thousand French nobles had been killed in duels! The penalties against principals, seconds, and even witnesses of duels ranged from heavy fines to loss of one's title of nobility and even death. So severe was this punishment that duelling almost disappeared in the eighteenth century. There was no appeal from this court.

754. We are left in the dark as to who informed the court of the quarrel. More probably Oronte had lodged the complaint that Alceste had insulted him, although Philinte may have wished to protect Alceste.

767. **venez** indicates Philinte's purpose to accompany Alceste to the session of the court of which he gives an account, 1133–1162.

769–772. Boileau in a letter of August 4, 1706 to the Marquis de Mimeure said, according to Brossette:

> Le chagrin du Misanthrope contre les méchants vers a été, comme Molière me l'a confessé plusieurs fois lui-même, copié sur mon modèle.

These words refer to an alleged effort on Molière's part to protect Chapelain from the satires of Boileau, to which Boileau made the answer:

> A moins *que le roi ne me commande expressément de trouver bons les vers* de Chapelain, je croirai toujours qu'un homme, après avoir fait *La Pucelle* [a poem by Chapelain] *mérite d'être pendu.*

Another angle of all this is the version of Louis Racine, son of the dramatist, who said that, when Boileau was asked to desist from his attacks on Chapelain because the latter enjoyed high protection and received visits from the great, the critic replied: "And if the Pope called on him, would that make his verses any better?"

772. **pendable:** apparently a favorite word with Alceste; cf. note 33; also note 1154.

773–774. The fact that Alceste does not realize that he is amusing constitutes one of the elements of his actually being a comic character.

According to Brossette, Boileau once imitated the manner in which Molière spoke these lines. They were accompanied by a bitter, stinging, satirical laugh, that was in strikingly comic

contrast with the words themselves. It is most unfortunate that Brossette's commentary on Molière's acting, a commentary based upon the personal testimony of Boileau and others, was lost. We have very little detailed information of Molière's skill as an actor, although there is general agreement that it was remarkable.

775–776. Note the vigorous presents **vais** and **reviens** used instead of futures, and cf. note 736. **sur mes pas:** obsolete for *de ce pas*. Note that this phrase and **en ce lieu** call attention to the observation of the unities of time and place.

ACT III

During most of this act Alceste is presumably at the Marshalls' Court for he does not appear until the last fourth of the dialogue. This absence enables Molière to develop the character of Célimène and her associates, the marquis, and to give us a remarkable analysis of Arsinoé who appears for the first time. These four are the only ones on the stage prior to Alceste's entrance. In all this we see the effective craftsmanship of the author.

777. Scene i is devoted exclusively to picturing the pettiness of the two marquis, especially Acaste. Molière often attacked such vanity, notably in Scene vi of *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes*, in Scene iii of *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, in *Les Fâcheux* and in *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. In Ernest Legouvé's *Soixante Ans de Souvenirs* (Vol. III, pp. 101–104) [1888] may be found an interesting passage about the rôle of Acaste as played by two famous actors Delaunoy and Firmin.

781–804. The similarities between Acaste's vain portrait of himself and that of the Duchesse de Montpensier, niece of Louis XIII, are noteworthy. See T. F. Crane's *La Société Française au XVII^e siècle*, pp. 66–74. It was quite the fashion thus to depict oneself in pen and ink.

784. **se peut dire:** for position of **se** cf. note 16.

786. **dont je ne sois en passe:** 'which I am not in a position to fill.' *être en passe de* + an infinitive is an expression taken from the game of mall; a player was *en passe* when his ball was so placed before an arch or wicket that he could easily win the point involved. Molière uses the same idiom in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (Scene ix) and in *Les Fâcheux* (verse 275).

787. **nous** is restricted here to the nobility. Note the several idioms with **faire: faire cas,** 787; **faire figure,** 793–794; **faire du fracas,** 795; **faire** was very frequently used in the seventeenth century and with it were created many expressions most of which have come down to modern times.

788. **sans vanité:** Montesquieu in *Les Lettres Persanes* (50) tells of a coxcomb who boasted of everything that he possessed and wound up by saying that his most esteemed quality was his modesty!

789. **une affaire** probably refers to a duel which he had managed to keep from the knowledge of the Marshalls' Court, of which fact he now boasts.

791. Another ternary verse; cf. note 574. **du bon goût:** cf. note 636.

792. **sans étude:** Mascarille in *Les Précieuses Ridicules* (Scene ix) says:

> Les gens de qualité savent tout sans avoir jamais rien appris.

Compare the similar vanity of Oronte in Act I, Scene ii.

793–796. According to Spencer these verses were omitted in early performances.

794. **sur les bancs du théâtre:** 'on the stage-seats.' In France, as well as in other countries at that time, men spectators were allowed to occupy seats placed on either side on the stage behind the curtain. Sometimes in crowded performances seats were also placed across the back of the stage. These seats, highly priced and hence a large source of income to the actors, were occupied by the gilded youth of the day whose impudent conduct often greatly handicapped the players. When all these seats were filled, spectators were even allowed to stand behind them, and to fill the wings. Such spectators thought nothing of arriving late, leaving at any time, crossing the stage, and even interrupting the actors, making themselves as conspicuous and obnoxious as possible. Their presence made a change of scenery practically impossible and had much to do with the long adherence to the unity of place. Often actors could not enter or exit in proper time:

> On attendait Pyrrhus, on vit paraître un fat.

Not until 1759, and then largely through the efforts of Voltaire, was this disturbing custom abolished.

Many interesting passages in plays refer to this custom. See for instance Regnard's *La Coquette*, Act III, Scene iii, and more recently Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, Act I whose stage-setting shows a seventeenth century play about to start under such conditions. Molière himself refers to this custom frequently and evidently he chafed under it. In *La Critique de l'Ecole des Femmes* he ridicules the judgment of such a spectator bringing it into unfavorable contrast with that of the pit occupied by the common people. The most instructive passage is in *Les Fâcheux* (Act I, verses 15–20, 28–34):

> Les acteurs commençaient, chacun prêtait silence,
> Lorsque d'un air bruyant et plein d'extravagance,
> Un homme à grands canons est entré brusquement,
> En criant: « Holà-ho! un siège promptement! »
> Et de son grand fracas surprenant l'assemblée,
> Dans le plus bel endroit a la pièce troublée.
>
> Les acteurs ont voulu continué leurs rôles;
> Mais l'homme pour s'asseoir a fait nouveau fracas
> Et traversant encor le théâtre à grands pas,
> Bien que dans les côtés il pût être à son aise,
> Au milieu du devant il a planté sa chaise,
> Et de son large dos morguant les spectateurs,
> Aux trois quarts du parterre a caché les acteurs.

795. Note omission of *à* before **y décider** and **faire,** also before **raisonner** in 792, although it is found before **juger,** 792 and **faire,** 793, all of which are in the same construction. Such an omission is optional in a long series of infinitives.

796. **des** ***has:*** ordinarily exclamations do not take the plural sign but here we have an eye-rhyme with **fracas.**

801. 'I enjoy the best reputation everywhere.' **y = estime.**

802. **maître:** the king; following Oronte, 290, and Clitandre, 567, 739, Acaste now boasts of royal favor; Arsinoé will also, 1076–1080, speak of enjoying influence at court. Such passages must have amused his majesty Louis XIV and his court.

803. **crois . . . croi:** the latter, older form used in the eye-rhyme with **soi;** cf. 263–264, 455–456.

810–813. **à brûler . . . languir . . . chercher: à** would now be *de*. For omission of preposition before **souffrir** and **tâcher** cf. note 795.

811–814 are usually omitted in performances.

816. **à crédit:** i.e. with small chance of repayment. Note the business nature of his courtship as seen in such words as **crédit, frais, prix, coûte, balances, avances** (816–820). One wonders whether he is a genuine nobleman when he uses so much commercial language.

818–821. The **qu'** of 818, **que** of 819 and **qu'** of 821 are in the same construction. The **on** of 818 is plainly himself: *on* often means the one speaking.

820. **la raison** for modern **une raison. qu'** for modern **pour que.** Translate: 'it is not reasonable that . . .'

823. **fort bien ici:** 'on excellent terms here (i.e. with Célimène).' Cf. note 603.

824. **lieu:** Acaste has reference, undoubtedly, to his receipt of the letter from Célimène which is read in Act V. Clitandre may also have received his letter, also to be read in Act V (cf. note 1037). Each letter shows her preference for the recipient! A comparison of the two letters will show that Clitandre's is far more explicit, thus making Acaste's boasting here most amusing. However Molière is far too clever to tell us about these letters yet. The sequence of his plot lies in the revealing by the marquis of these letters to each other, and their resulting mutual desire to expose the perfidy of Célimène.

828. **qui** here equals modern **qu'est-ce qui,** 'what?' In the seventeenth century *qui*, the interrogative, could also refer to things; La Fontaine says (*Fables* II, 5): « *Qui* fait l'oiseau? c'est le plumage." See another instance, 852.

830–832. Clitandre is getting anxious! His use of **preuves** and a moment later of **secrets aveux** shows his growing suspicion that all is not as he thought. Hence he boldly suggests the agreement (839–845) which will lead directly to the showing of the two letters (cf. note 824).

835. **me dis = dis-moi;** in a series of imperatives, the last, though positive, may in this time have its pronoun precede: cf. note 1583. **on** here and in 837 is Célimène.

836. In Gilbert's *Rhodogune* (1646) is the verse:

Je suis le malheureux, et vous le fortuné.

839. **pour ajuster nos vœux:** 'to settle amicably our love-affairs.'

841. **qui** has here no antecedent and is equivalent to *si quelqu'un*, 'if one of us.'

marque certaine = cf. note 824.

843. **prétendu:** apparently in the meaning of 'future.' **vainqueur** is the one who can show the **marque certaine,** 841.

846. **du bon de mon cœur:** 'with all my heart.' **du bon** = modern **du meilleur;** cf. **du meilleur de mon âme,** 1214.

847. **encore ici:** because of Clitandre's reply « L'amour *retient* nos pas, » one is led to translate **encore ici** as an amiable 'still here' and to think that they had not even left the house, not having anywhere else to go all day (cf. 737–740). Célimène had evidently left them to entertain each other, another proof of their familiar position in her home.

848. **entrer un carrosse:** an indication of the high social position and wealth of Célimène; her house has an inner court into which carriages may drive, instead of standing upon the street.

850. **monte:** cf. 253. **femme** implies contempt, even bitterness.

851. **Eliante là-bas est à l'entretenir:** 'Eliante is talking to her down-stairs.' **là-bas:** cf. second introductory paragraph before note 1.

852. **qui:** 'what.' See note 828.

853. **prude;** cf. note 216.

854–864. Cf. the almost identical picture of a prude, Oronte, as described by Dorine in *Le Tartuffe*, Act I, Scene i, verses 121–140.

854. **pure grimace:** 'it's all put on,' i.e. nothing but hypocrisy. As in *Le Tartuffe*, Molière is careful to indicate that he is not attacking true piety (**zèle**).

855. **ses soins tentent tout:** 'she makes every effort.'

856. **accrocher:** cf. note 548. See also Arsinoé's attempt upon Alceste at the end of this act.

859. **son triste mérite** is equivalent to 'her lost charms,'

Molière's style abounds in examples of a substitution of some personal quality for a person; cf. **son misérable honneur,** 134; **son mérite,** 619; **ma conscience,** 1107, etc.

860. **aveugle,** according to Arsinoé.

862. **ce que . . . d'affreuse solitude:** 'that (degree or amount of) fearful loneliness,' i.e. the absence of admirers; same construction, 867; cf. note 270. **chez elle:** 'about her.'

863–864. Rather confused syntax. Livet suggests the interpretation:

> Pour sauver l'honneur, pour faire croire à la puissance de ses charmes, elle fait la prude, et, pour faire croire qu'elle regarderait comme un crime de laisser les amoureux se prendre à ses attraits, elle feint de quitter le monde, qui, au contraire, la quitte.

'She brands as criminal the power her charms do not possess.'

866. **tendresse d'âme:** cf. *douceur de cœur* in *Le Tartuffe* (837). It is a pity that such picturesque expressions have passed out of the language.

867. **ce que . . . de:** cf. note 270.

872. **impertinente:** « qui parle ou qui agit contre la raison, la discrétion, la bienséance » (*Dictionnaire de l'Académie,* 1694).

873–876. She does precisely what Alceste said in 653–656. Note especially the humor of **sans mentir.** No social hypocrisy is unfamiliar to her. Thirion remarks: « Elle se meut avec une grâce facile au milieu des perfidies et des mensonges. » This sort of an incident is what La Bruyère cleverly calls « le mensonge de toute la personne. »

875. **pour quelque avis:** this hint at a desire for a private interview is a sufficient motivation for the withdrawal of the marquis. Molière is always clever in the motivation of his entrances and exits which do not appear forced.

878. Today more politely: *Voulez-vous prendre la peine de vous asseoir.*

Il = cela. By this somewhat unusual refusal which approaches rudeness, Arsinoé probably indicates that her call is not a mere social visit; "she means business" (Joynes).

880. Position of **nous;** cf. note 16.

883. **par un avis** almost repeats 875; Arsinoé seems to be reciting something she has prepared.

885. **hier:** monosyllabic here and in 1068, as usually in Molière; yet in *Les Femmes Savantes* (514) it is dissyllabic. Boileau's influence seems to have settled *hier* as dissyllabic; before his time, in Corneille for instance, it is monosyllabic, after his time as in Racine, it is dissyllabic.

887, 890. **grands éclats,** 'noisy display' and **galanterie,** constituted a very serious reproach to a woman at that time if we may judge by La Bruyère's description of *une femme galante* in *Les Caractères* (No. 22 of *Des Femmes*); cf. also La Rochefoucauld (*Maximes* 73 and 499). Célimène does not really quite merit so severe a criticism; hence her anger justifies her bitter reply.

891. 'found more censors than there should have been.'

893–894. **pouvez . . . pus . . . pouvoir:** this triple use of the same verb might be criticized in a purely literary style, but in ordinary conversation such use is natural.

900. *vivicz* for **vivez** in the earliest edition does not seem correct despite its adoption by Despois-Mesnard and many editors. Yet *viviez* may be justified by the fact that the other verbs in the passage are mostly in the past tense.

901–902. **il** in 901 and **en** in 902 refer to **air,** 900; **il** in 902 is 'there.'

901. Molière seems to wish to indicate the age of Arsinoé by having her use many expressions current in Voiture's day which had since become obsolescent (Gache). Cf. the *pointe* she makes in 1129–1130, her use of **discords,** 1680, of **terriblement,** 986, etc.

902. Note the two cases of **ne** sufficing as a negative.

903. **déportements** now means bad conduct, but could mean either good or bad at that time.

908. We would expect *que* here after **assez;** cf. note 58.

909. **je vous crois:** 'I believe you have.'

909–912. Cf. 957–960, Célimène's clever use of the same words.

910–911. "to take amiss this useful warning or think it due to any other motive than" (Page). The **qu'** of 911 may be 'only'; if so, we should expect a **ne** before **l'attribuer** (as suggested by an early commentator, Bret). However, we may assume that the **ne** of 910 is doing double duty. Another way out of the difficulty is to supply *à autre chose* after **attribuer,** in which case **qu'** will

mean 'than.' This line is an illustration of the author's frequent use of ellipsis.

922. Cf. 885. Célimène will parody the words of Arsinoé and end with an exact quotation from her (957–960). Her mimicry is most humorous. A line-by-line comparison of the two speeches is interesting.

923. 'who, in discussing the true duties of a righteous soul.'

925. **éclats de zèle** parodies the **grands éclats** of 887, and indicates zealousness in religion, to judge by 939, 941, and also by the **zèle** of 854 which is brought into direct contrast with **du monde.**

930. **mot ambigu:** Molière will return to this idea of ambiguous words and even syllables in verses 909–918 of *Les Femmes Savantes*, where Philaminte, the blue-stocking and *précieuse*, demands

> Le retranchement de ces syllabes sales
> Qui dans les plus beaux mots produisent des scandales,
>
> Ces sources d'un amas d'équivoques infâmes,
> Dont on vient faire insulte à la pudeur des femmes.

931. 'the excessively good opinion you have of yourself.' Rhyme **vous . . . tous;** cf. note 47–48.

939. 'she is very precise in saying her prayers properly.'

940. **bat ses gens:** beating of servants was common at that time, showing that the frequent use of such instances in contemporary comedy is not mere stage exaggeration. Loret's *La Muse historique* of August 13, 1651 tells of a 'lady,' Madame de Vervins,

> Plus barbare qu'une tigresse
> Qui se plaît, tant son cœur est dur
> De fouetter jusqu'au sang tout pur . . .
>
> Quelque page, laquais ou fille,
> Exerçant ce métier abject
> Ordinairement sans sujet.

The special incident was her beating of a girl who, to escape such cruelty, jumped out of a window, naked and bloody. Contemporary books on jurisprudence refer frequently to the beatings of servants. Saint-Simon (Vol. II, Chapter 34) narrates

how a robust woman-servant once turned tables on the Princesse d'Harcourt, notorious for her cruelty, giving her highness « cent soufflets et autant de coups de poing et de pied. » The same lady neglected paying her servants who once left her. Thus Molière had illustrious example for this verse.

paye is here dissyllabic, although usually in poetry the mute *e* is ignored.

942. Cf. note 83.

943. **des tableaux** belongs syntactically after **nudités.** This hypocrisy recalls that of Tartuffe in a scene with Dorine (*Le Tartuffe*, Act III, Scene ii).

948–956. Unexpected wisdom from Célimène.

948. In **feriez,** the **–iez** counts as one syllable. Cf. note 499–500.

950. If **un peu plus** belongs together as a phrase, there can be no cæsura after the sixth syllable; if **plus** goes with **en peine** we have a weak cæsura; the former possibility gives added emphasis by dividing the stress irregularly:

Et de vous mettre | un peu plus | en peine des vôtres.

se mettre en peine occurs also in 145.

952. **avant que de:** cf. note 282.

956. **ceux:** i.e. parents, guardians, priests, confessors, etc.

957–960. Witty repetition of 909–912.

962. Gustave Merlet remarks truly of this that Arsinoé was really too simple-minded if she expected anything else after her own attack.

964. **vous a blessée au cœur:** 'has cut you to the quick,' precisely as Arsinoé wished it to do.

966. **seraient mis en usage:** 'would become the custom.'

967. **traitant de bonne foi:** 'in sincere interviews.'

970–971. The **ne** is expletive, i.e. we do *not* now do so. **–ions** in both **continuions** and **prenions** counts as one syllable; cf. note 499–500.

973–974. Trapped and beaten, Arsinoé tries to save herself from her mistaken tactics by this weak retraction. 963–964 is a similar weak reply. One suspects that Arsinoé's statement, 885 ff. was a fabrication; in all probability Célimène's rejoinder was also.

979. **en prendre le parti:** 'justify its use'; **en = pruderie,** 978.

985. **vous vous targuez:** 'you pride yourself.' *Se targuer* comes from *targe*, a shield; shields bore coats of arms which were objects of pride to their possessors.

987. 'the slight difference between our ages.' This embarrassed phraseology reveals how painful to Arsinoé is this admission. For **ce que de** cf. notes 270, 862. **en = âge,** 986. **on = je.**

988. **s'en tant prévaloir:** 'to boast so much about it'; **en =** verse 987.

992. **vous déchaîner sur moi:** Voltaire declared that *contre moi* should have been used, but in Corneille's *Nicomède*, 1530, we read:

C'est un lion tout prêt à déchaîner *sur* moi.

994. 'Have I any control over the fact that no one pays you any attention?' **mais** from Latin *magis* has in this phrase a slight residue of its etymological meaning 'more,' 'further.' One can still say *Je n'en puis mais.*

998. **que faire = faire quelque chose;** 'I cannot do anything about it.'

1000. **les = gens,** 995.

1010. **en** refers to the idea of 'women' contained in the context; hence **faites** is feminine plural. Arsinoé evidently considers herself such a woman.

1012. "who don't have lovers always dangling round 'em' (Page).

1015. **pour nos beaux yeux:** 'for our good looks alone,' i.e. just for nothing.

1017. **gloire** often meant 'conceit,' 'pride,' 'vanity.' Same meaning in 1518.

1018. **Pour les petits brillants:** 'because of the paltry glitter.' An adjective commonly found with **brillants** is *faux* in the sense of 'false diamonds'; cf. **faux billants,** 416. **brillants** is quite a frequent word in the seventeenth century; a clever poem was said to have *bien des brillants.*

1020. **de haut:** variant **du haut.**

1023. **ne se point ménager:** 'be lavish of one's self-respect.'

1025. **voyons cette affaire:** 'let's see how this will work.'

1027. **brisons:** Arsinoé, driven to the wall, confesses her defeat

just as Tartuffe did to Cléante in a most characteristic way (*Le Tartuffe*, end of Scene i, Act III). In similar manner Célimène shut off Alceste, 731, when he became too insistent.

1028. Cf. 1074–1075 of *Don Garcie de Navarre:*

> . . . je ne veux point qu'un pareil entretien
> Puisse trop échauffer votre esprit et le mien.

1031. **arrêter** for **vous arrêter;** similar use of simple verb for modern reflexive, 1661.

1035. **fait venir:** 'brings here.'

1037. One may query whether this **mot de lettre** may be one or the other of the letters read in Act V; if so, it is more likely the one to Clitandre; cf. note 824.

1040. **aisément:** delightfully ironic.

1041. **elle veut que je vous entretienne:** note that Célimène had said just the reverse in 1036.

1042. **attendant = en attendant.**

1043–1048. These flattering words are in reality a declaration of love, thinly veiled by the **de chacun** of 1046 which modifies both **amour** and **estime.** She becomes personal with **mon cœur,** 1048.

1048. **le vôtre = mérite,** 1045.

1050–1052, 1055–1056. These passages prove abundantly that Alceste cannot well be identified with the Duc de Montausier who at this time was in highest favor with the king. See Livet's note to verses 289–292 for a list of these great favors. However a partial identification still remains possible.

1050. **à ce que vous valez:** 'to your worth.'

1051. **vous avez à vous plaindre:** 'you have reason to complain.'

1053. **Et sur quoi pourrais-je en rien prétendre:** a much discussed verse. **sur quoi:** 'on what basis.' **en rien prétendre:** 'have any claim to anything.' The only parallel to the last phrase is, according to Boully, in the self-portrait of La Rochefoucauld:

> J'ai les cheveux noirs, naturellement frisés, et avec cela assez épais et assez longs *pour pouvoir prêtendre en belle tête,* i. e. to lay claim to a fine head.

Another interpretation is to assume that **rien** is the direct object of **prétendre,** and that **en** is the pronoun and means 'from

the court.' One objection to this is the remoteness of the antecedent **la cour** in 1049.

1056. **fait** would now be *fasse* after the suggestion of emotion contained in **me plaindre,** but in the seventeenth century the indicative could be used when a fact was stated; here *nothing* was done for Alceste. Thus La Fontaine has (*Psyché* I):

> Elle fut tout étonnée que les nymphes lui *amenèrent* ses sœurs.

And Mme de Sévigné says:

> Il est ravi que je *suis* hors d'affaire.

à la cour belongs after **ne fait rien.**

Verses 1054–1056 were clearly intended to hit those courtiers of little merit who were always pushing themselves forward.

1064. **d'avoir à = si elle avait à.**

1066. **on fait un cas extrême:** 'one values very highly.' Compare Oronte's emphasis upon Alceste's merit, 257–270.

1067–1068. Here the **deux** has the effect of exaggeration. To Célimène she had spoken apparently of only one visit, 885. **hier** is again monosyllabic; cf. note 885.

1069. **l'on loue:** cf. note 480.

1070. **par là** refers to the fact that everyone is praised (1069); it belongs best after **confonde.** Translate: "The present age has no distinctions left" (Page). We have seen in 63 Alceste's insistence that distinctions should be made. Cf. his whole speech, 41–64.

1074. **dans la gazette:** *La Gazette de France,* the court paper founded in 1631 by Théophraste Renaudot, gave all news of interest to the aristocracy and always with much fulsome and unmerited praise for those cited. Molière is not mentioned in its columns before 1664 when it took a hostile attitude toward him as the author of *Le Tartuffe.* Nor did it give much space to Molière's company, although the activities of the rival troupe of the Hôtel de Bourgogne are fully reported. This fact probably explains Molière's dig here.

1075. **pour vous montrer:** 'to show your worth.'

1076. 'might attract your attention.'

1077. **les mines** is plural for the sake of the rhyme, as there

seems to be no other instance of such plural use with *faire.* Translate: 'however slight an indication you may give us that you desire a position at court.' **y = une charge à la cour,** 1076.

1081–1098. This criticism of the court might have been resented, had Molière assigned it to any other character than Alceste, to Eliante for instance. Elsewhere, notably in *Les Femmes Savantes*, Act III, Scene iii, he defended the court for its common sense and good taste against the attacks of pedants like Trissotin.

This portrait of Alceste by himself shows him well aware of his own personality; cf. earlier passages, notably 299–300. As a contrast La Bruyère's picture of a courtier is of interest;

> Un homme qui sait la cour est maître de son geste, de ses yeux et de son visage; il est profond, impénétrable; il dissimule les mauvais offices, sourit à ses ennemis, contraint son humeur, déguise ses passions, dément son cœur, parle, agit contre ses sentiments; tout ce grand raffinement n'est qu'un vice que l'on appelle fausseté . . . (*Les Caractères: De la cour* No. 2).

A similar picture is in Fléchier's *Oraison Funèbre de Montausier;* another in Régnier's third satire; a third in Boileau's first satire.

1082. **L'humeur dont je me sens:** 'my disposition.' *se sentir de quelque chose,* to feel aware of, conscious of.

veut: 'requires.'

1085. **me = en moi. vertus** may be ironical here.

1086. **faire mes affaires:** 'make my way.'

1090. **en ce pays** i.e. the court. Boileau's first satire (42–43) has:

> Mais moi, vivre à Paris! Eh! qu'y voudrais-je faire?
> Je ne sais ni tromper, ni feindre, ni mentir.

which is an adaptation of Juvenal:

> What shall I do in Rome? I don't know how to lie, and when a book is bad, it is impossible for me to praise it and ask for it.

1094. Cf. note 350. Molière excels in maintaining the consistency of his characters, even to the extent of their favorite expressions.

1095–1098. This repetition of rhymes with the sound **el** seems purposed, perhaps to suggest the monotony of such an existence at court. 1096 plainly refers to Oronte and his kind, 1097 to Célimène, and 1098 to Acaste and Clitandre. For **encens** cf.

662 where Célimène is also meant. **essuyer la cervelle:** 'endure the brainless folly'; usually an adjective *sotte, légère, évaporée* accompanies **cervelle,** but here the association with **marquis** presupposes such a meaning. **essuyer:** cf. note 556.

1100. Arsinoé now changes tactics and makes another effort to be tender and sympathetic; cf. **cœur,** 1048.

1104. Spoken with assumed indignation.

1110. **on** is of course Célimène. One must assume here, and certainly with 1129–1130, that Arsinoé alreadv has proof.

1111–1112. Ironical. We must admire Alceste for his loyal, gentlemanly attitude. He really does not want this evidence, but Arsinoé practically forces it upon him. The contrast between the two natures is masterly.

1113. **toute mon amie:** 'although she is my friend'; cf. 1106. See also note 390. **je la nomme:** 'I declare her.'

1117. **se serait bien passée:** 'might well have refrained.' Now: *aurait bien dû se passer.*

1127. **vous fassent foi:** 'show you proof.'

1128. **donnez-moi . . . la main:** the polite way to escort a lady was to offer the right hand to her left; cf. stage-direction at beginning of Act II.

1129–1130. **fidèle . . . infidélité:** plays on words are rare in Molière; cf. notes 331–335, 628. This one is a sort of *pointe* belonging to the time of the *précieuses.* Arsinoé's age is shown by her use of it (cf. note 901). There is a touch of triumph also, and in **votre belle** a dose of irony. The pun was fairly common. Malherbe wrote in the first stanza of *Les Larmes de Saint Pierre:*

Une fidèle preuve à l'infidélité;

and Corneille in verse 1147 of *Cinna* has:

Rends un sang infidèle à l'infidélité.

1129. The **preuve fidèle** was the letter which Alceste brings, Act IV, Scene ii. See especially 1236–1237, 1324, 1340.

1131. **d'autres yeux:** i.e. herself; that Alceste clearly so understands is seen in the sequence 1716 ff. Arsinoé is making every effort to « accrocher » Alceste; cf. 856.

1132. Arsinoé leads Alceste away to her home where he is

given the letter alleged to have been written to Oronte by Célimène. How Arsinoé got hold of it remains a mystery. Thus Molière again shows his skill in admirably binding his play together. About this letter is woven the strong fourth act. Our interest is kept at top-notch. While *Le Misanthrope* is not a play of action, yet Molière is nowhere more clever in creating a crescendo of interest. Structurally the play is faultless.

ACT IV

1133. **à manier si dure:** 'so hard to manage,' as if Alceste were a balky horse; cf. notes 347, 1729.

1138. **ces messieurs:** the Marshalls' Court, to which Alceste had been summoned, 751–752.

1139–1154. Boileau in the ninth satire (1668) has similar words à propos of his attack upon Chapelain (cf. note 769–772):

> Ma Muse, en l'attaquant, charitable et discrète,
> Sait de l'homme d'honneur distinguer le poète.
> Qu'on vante en lui la foi, l'honneur, la probité,
> Qu'on prise sa candeur et sa civilité,
> Qu'il soit doux, complaisant, officieux, sincère,
> On le veut, j'y souscris, et suis prêt à me taire.

1141. **il** = Oronte. **que veut-il me dire:** 'what does he want of me?'

1142. **y va-t-il de sa gloire?:** 'Is his honor at stake?'

1143. **qu'il a pris de travers:** 'at which he took offence.'

1144. This verse has become a proverb. Cf. note 314.

1146. Alceste will be forced to change this opinion; see 1505–1516.

1151. **je suis son serviteur:** 'I respectfully decline'; cf. 438.

1152. **d'en mieux faire:** 'to write better verses.'

1153–1154. **On ne doit . . . que:** 'one should have no desire . . . unless.'

1154. **sur peine** = modern **sous peine.** In Racan's *Vie de Malherbe* is the following anecdote which may have suggested to Molière the sonnet scene of Act I:

> Un homme de robe longue, de condition, lui apporta des vers assez mal polis, qu'il avait faits à la louange d'une dame . . . M. de Malherbe les lut avec mépris, et lui demanda . . . s'il avait été condamné à être pendu ou à

faire ces vers-là, parce que, à moins de cela, il ne devait point exposer sa réputation en produisant des ouvrages si ridicules.

1157. **bien:** variant **mieux,** 1734. The subject of **dire** and **croyant** is 'Alceste' supplied from the context; cf. note 23.

1161. **embrassade:** this is highly amusing in view of Alceste's avoidance of embracing Oronte even before their quarrel (cf. 273–275).

1161–1162. **fait . . . envelopper** is regarded as a compound verb. A verb may have only one direct object, which here is **procédure;** hence the other object **leur** must be indirect. Cf. 1598.

1163–1168. This kindly and fair criticism of Alceste by the « sincère Eliante » should be contrasted with Célimène's ugly attack upon him (669–680). Yet Célimène had admitted her love for him (503–506)! 1164 is indicative of Eliante's « penchant » for Alceste to which Philinte referred, 215. We have in these lines in all probability Molière's own judgment of Alceste. In all his plays Molière has one or more persons of sound common-sense who are his spokesmen. Leys makes an interesting comment:

> Après ces paroles d'Eliante, c'est à dire, de la personne la plus sensée de la pièce, comment a-t-on pu prétendre que Molière avait voulu, par le rôle d'Alceste, tourner la vertu en ridicule?

1164. **en** = Alceste; *en* is now rarely used to refer to persons.

1169–1174. Philinte had already said as much and more to Alceste (209–224). The rest of this scene between Philinte and Eliante drags somewhat and is perhaps the only weak place in the play. However it is at least a foil for the brilliant scenes that follow.

1175–1179. Compare with these lines Eliante's similar sensible remarks in 711–730.

1175. **Cela fait assez voir:** 'this shows with ample clearness.'

1176. **rapport d'humeurs:** 'congeniality of dispositions.'

1177. **douces sympathies:** this phrase suggests the idea of 'elective affinities' (love at first sight) familiar to Molière's public through contemporary romances and several plays of Corneille, notably *Rodogune* (1644), verses 359–361:

Il est des nœuds secrets, il est des *sympathies*
Dont par le *doux rapport* les âmes assorties
S'attachent l'une à l'autre . . .

1179. The first **on** is Célimène, the second is truly indefinite; cf. note 56.

1180–1184. As in the case of Alceste, Eliante is here most liberal and charitable. Perhaps because she is Célimène's cousin, she, of all the characters, judges her least harshly.

The **il** of 1180, 1181 and 1184 are impersonal; those of 1182 and 1183 refer to **cœur.**

1180. Strictly speaking there is no cæsura-pause in this verse.

1182. This verse is one of about fifty in Molière consisting entirely of monosyllables; the century was rather fond of such verses.

1184. **qu'il n'en est rien:** 'when such is not the case.'

1185. **des chagrins plus = plus de chagrins. chagrins:** 'disappointments.'

1188. **tout** as adverb of intensity was more often used then than now, and even in such expressions as *tout chacun*, *tout tel*, *tout ainsi*, etc. Cf. note 28.

1191. **je n'en fais point de façons:** 'I am perfectly frank about it.' **croi:** another old form; cf. note 263–264.

This verse is another case of irregular cæsura, having pauses after the second and ninth syllables.

1193. **sa tendresse:** Alceste's love for Célimène, as shown clearly in 1196. Eliante has not a vestige of jealousy despite 1200–1202.

1194. **elle = tendresse,** 1193.

1195. 'And if the matter could be in my control'; 'if I could arrange the matter.'

1196. **l'unir . . . à ce qu'il aime:** 'unite him to his belovèd.'

1197. **comme tout se peut faire:** 'since everything is possible,' in accordance with her words of 1180–1184.

1199. **s'il fallait:** 'if it should chance'; cf. note 169. **d'un autre,** i.e. than Alceste. **on** = Célimène. This whole passage is tinged with the metaphorical, sentimental language of the *précieuses* which Molière apparently cannot wholly avoid even on the lips of the « sincère Eliante. »

1201. **le refus:** of Alceste by Célimène.

1202. **y = à recevoir ses vœux,** 1200.

1203–1212. This declaration, cool, restrained, and conventionally expressed is apparently designed as a strong contrast to Alceste's passionate outburst of the following scene.

1204. **vos appas:** again a quality for the actual person; cf. note 859.

1206. Cf. 215, 243–246.

1211–1212. **heureux:** a strong ellipsis for 'I would be happy.'

y and **elle = faveur,** 1209.

1214. **Et:** 'rather'; 'on the contrary.' **du meilleur de mon âme:** 'with my whole soul' Cf. note 846.

1216. **en = de m'offrir hautement,** 1215. This passage should be connected with 1797–1798 where Eliante accepts Philinte in a charming manner.

1217–1276. This scene is one of the most powerful of the play, requiring the greatest skill from the actor interpreting Alceste. We see Alceste, in a way not hitherto revealed, as a man of intense emotion, especially in such lines as 1220–1230. Note that, despite his excitement, he does not reveal the source of his information, for he is too thoroughly a gentleman. Verses 1219–1230 are taken almost verbally from Molière's *Don Garcie de Navarre* (Act IV, Scene vii, verses 1230–1241) which had not been successful on the stage in 1661. Thus Molière felt justified in using some of its material in *Le Misanthrope* and in *Amphitryon* and *Les Femmes Savantes*, since he had not published the earlier play. Indeed it was not printed until 1682 after Molière's death. La Grange discovered it in the famous valise together with much other material. Unfortunately this valise was with its valuable contents lost later.

The great difference between *Don Garcie de Navarre* and *Le Misanthrope* is that in the former the woman is innocent, whereas in the latter she is proved a flirt.

1217. **faites-moi raison:** 'avenge me.'

1218. **constance:** 'steadfastness' (of soul), rather than constancy in love (Gache).

1219. **Qu'avez-vous, qui vous puisse émouvoir?** 'Why are

you so stirred?' Literally: 'what is the matter with you that can stir you?' For position of **vous** before **puisse** cf. note 16.

1220 'It is a matter that 'tis death to think of.'

1223. **C'en est fait:** ''Tis all over.'

1225–1226. Similar in thought to Racine's *Phèdre*, verses 1039–1040.

> Ne devrait-on pas à des signes certains
> Reconnaître le cœur des perfides humains?

1225. **Faut-il qu'on joigne:** 'Why must there be joined?' **on** = Célimène of whose untrustworthiness Alceste already had suspicion; cf. 217–234; and especially Scene i of Act II.

1227–1230. The depth of Alceste's sincerity and Célimène's lack of it may be gauged by trying to imagine her uttering such words.

1233 and following verses may again be compared with *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1242 ff. Cf. note 1217–1276.

1235–1236. **C'est . . . que l'avoir:** cf. note 58. **l' = trahison.**

1237. **madame:** Eliante had evidently shown her amazement. **lettre:** cf. note 1132.

1238. **sa** = Célimène.

1239. Célimène will say as much in the letter read in Act V (1690, 28–31).

1245. Note the emphasis secured by having the cæsura after the ninth syllable.

1246. **cet ouvrage:** i.e. 1245. He means that Eliante alone can soothe him.

1249. **parente:** another mention of the fact that Eliante and Célimène are cousins; cf. 244, 1173.

1252–1258. Only Alceste's excitement and his keen suffering (**cuisant ennui,** 1248) can excuse his lack of judgment in thus offering himself to Eliante in the presence of a third party. This is one of the places where Molière's genius deftly merges the tragic with the comic. Alceste is quite unaware that he is ridiculous; hence he remains a comic character. Contrast with this passage that at the end of the play, 1785–1795, in which all comic touches are absent. In both passages Alceste's suffering is tragic.

1255–1258. The expressions **sincères vœux, profond amour, soins respectueux, devoirs empressés, assidu service, ardent sacrifice** remind us by contrast of the locations on the celebrated *Carte du Tendre* of Mlle de Scudéry: *petits soins, grands services, jolis vers, grand esprit, billet doux, grand cœur*, etc. One almost wonders if Molière had in mind his own map of true love. The effect of the use of adjectives is similar in each case. Some critics, notably Gache, think these expressions unworthy of Alceste.

1262. Variant: Et vous *pouvez* quitter . . . 1734.

1268. 'And everyone knows what a lover's wrath is.' Publius Syrus may here be quoted:

> The anger of lovers is the restoration of love; in love anger is always a liar.

1272. Alceste may indeed cease to esteem Célimène, but can he, on his own confession, cease to love her? (Cf. 225–234, 519–520, and above all 1415–1418.)

1273–1277. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1255:

> La voici. Ma fureur, te peux-tu retenir?

1277–1435. This scene, one of the most celebrated in world drama, has been aptly described by Auger as a battle royal between « l'amour avec toutes ses fureurs et la perfidie avec toutes ses ruses. » And perfidy wins the victory, at least temporarily, for Alceste, despite his firm resolve of 1269–1276, surrenders completely to his tragic love for the faithless Célimène. With her smiles and soft answers she twists him around her finger, and wins him back. The scene is a severe test of actors who undertake it. Among the famous Alcestes since Molière himself, Molé was accounted the most remarkable here.

In an histrionic sense the scene is primarily Célimène's, for, despite her smaller share in the dialogue (one half as much as Alceste, and much of it one-verse speeches), she claims our chief attention. We wonder how she can possibly win in a battle that at first appears so unequal.

1281–1284. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1260–1263. Alceste's violent language reveals thoroughly his excitement and contrasts with Célimène's coolness.

1281. **que** depends upon a « ils veulent dire » understood from 1279.

1287–1314. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1274–1301, of which only eight verses are here slightly altered.

1287. **bien** modifies **plutôt,** not **rougissez.** Translate 'far rather.'

1289. 'That is what my troubled soul was foreboding.'

1291. **on trouvait odieux:** 'You found distasteful.' See Act II, Scene i.

1294. **astre** is a mere figure of speech; we are not to assume that astrology was any basis for Alceste's belief. Even the unromantic Boileau says at the beginning of *l'Art Poétique:*

Si son astre en naissant ne l'a formé poète.

1296. **dépit** was then a much stronger word; Furetière defined it as « colère qui donne du dégoût d'une chose contre laquelle on se fâche. » Translate by two words 'humiliation and disgust.'

1302. **votre bouche:** i.e. 'you' or 'your lips'; mouth being a somewhat unpoetic word.

1303. **rejetant:** the subject is a « vous » understood from the **votre** in 1302; another type of *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23.

1305. **aveu:** see 503–506, particularly Célimène's own use of **aveu** in 506. Yet see 512 where she shiftily retracts; cf. notes 503, 512. In 1391–1414 will come another avowal couched in such a vague way that neither Alceste nor we can trust her.

1309. **oui, oui:** probably in answer to some gesture of surprise and impatience.

1310. 'I am no longer master of myself; I am filled with wrath.'

1311. Cf. Corneille's *Le Cid*, 291–292:

Percé jusques au fond du cœur
D'une atteinte imprévue aussi bien que *mortelle.*

Percé agrees with an understood *je* supplied from **mes sens,** 1312; another *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23. **assassinez:** cf. same word 1228.

1312. **mes sens** for **je;** cf. note 859.

1315–1332. Taken with minor changes in six verses only from *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 550–567.

1316. Note the brevity of her replies; she is playing for time,

uncertain just which one or ones of her several flirtations Alceste has discovered.

1317. **dans votre vue:** 'in beholding you.' Already wrath is tempered with tenderness.

1326. Gache says here: « *On* n'a peutêtre rien à répondre; mais Célimène trouvera. »

1331. **pour n'avoir point:** 'because it has no'; *pour* frequently introduces a causal clause in the seventeenth century: cf. note 120–121. The fact that the letter has no signature is of interest in revealing Célimène's methods of writing.

1339. Oronte says later (1700) that Célimène had written him often.

1340. **les gens:** although it was unquestionably Arsinoé who gave him the letter, Alceste could not have said « celle qui » without betraying her; « celui qui » would have been a greater departure from the probable truth. We remain, however, somewhat divided between admiration for Alceste's gentlemanly conduct in protecting Arsinoé and blame for his evasion. Cf., however, note 1356.

aujourd'hui: unity of time again; cf. note 563.

1345. Quinault in *La Comédie sans comédie* (1654) had used this subterfuge.

1348. **me voilà . . . convaincu:** 'now I am convinced'; cf. **le voilà devenu,** 1514.

1351. **biais** is only one syllable; cf. note 499–500.

1353. **tourner pour une femme:** 'apply to a woman.' Cf. the same thought, 1364.

1355. **manquement:** Molière had a special fondness for nouns in *–ment.*

1356. **lire:** we are eager to hear the letter read, but Célimène deftly turns the tables, as she did at 511, and we are left in the dark as to her guilt or innocence. A very plausible explanation of the mystery is that Oronte, by letting Arsinoé get hold of the letter, could accomplish two purposes, namely avenge himself on Alceste and win Célimène away from him. He makes this latter effort in Act V, Scene ii. If Alceste knew that Oronte had given the letter to Arsinoé, then his use of « les gens » in 1340 would be the truth without evasion.

moi is really a dative, but the *à* is omitted, or, with Thirion, we may supply *quant à*. Same hemistich *Le Tartuffe*, 575.

1357. **d'user d'un tel empire:** 'to be so dictatorial.' Célimène now rapidly resumes her ascendancy over Alceste, who, forbidden to show proof, begs for it.

1358. **dire au nez:** cf. note 548. **m'osez dire:** for position of pronoun see note 16.

1359. **sans s'emporter** for **sans vous,** (or more politely) **sans nous, emporter. sans s'emporter** is still milder and more conciliatory, because more general; it is really an ellipsis for *sans qu'aucun de nous deux s'emporte.*

1361. **je n'en veux rien faire:** 'I'll do nothing of the sort.'

1365–1367. Hardly in harmony with her sweeping contempt of Oronte in the letter to Acaste, 1690, 28–32! As with all liars we can never know when Célimène is telling the truth. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 574–575:

> Non, c'est pour un amant que ma main l'a formé
> Et j'ajoute de plus, pour un amant aimé.

Célimène had employed the same evasive tactics, 511–513 and 557.

1368. Same verse, 1555.

1371–1372. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1391–1392.

1374. Position of **me**; cf. note 16. The passage following resembles the words of Oreste in Racine's *Andromaque*, 1565–1582.

1377. **lâche:** cf. note 230.

1381–1384. Cf. *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 1396–1399.

1382. **faiblesse;** cf. note 230.

1385. **crime:** in 1742 Célimène applies this same word to her conduct; Boully suggests that the meaning is from the etymological *crimen*, i.e. reproach, accusation, indictment, arraignment, and not from *scelus*, crime, wicked deed.

1387. Prose order: **Rendez-moi innocent . . . ce billet.**

1388. In **prêter les mains, mains** is merely figurative, for otherwise we have a strange metaphor, **tendresse** possessing **mains;** yet in 1432 we have **des mains de mon amour** and in 1761 **pourvu que *votre cœur* veuille donner les mains.**

1391. Having won the victory, Célimène now proceeds to follow his plea **de paraître fidèle!** However she is still the deceiver with whom the honest Alceste has been forced to compromise.

1392. **on = je.** Cf., however, this use of the indefinite pronoun with her similar use of the passive, 503.

1396. We are almost convinced of her « sincérité » as she utters these words. It is here that we might remember Eliante's analysis of her character (1181–1184):

> Comment pouvoir juger s'il est vrai qu'elle l'aime?
> Son cœur de ce qu'il sent n'est pas bien sûr lui-même, etc.

1397–1408. Célimène's language has been criticized as repetitious and verbose, but such criticism forgets that Molière is representing her as either really embarrassed or pretending to be, trying to escape from a dilemma. Under such circumstances her words reflect admirably her efforts. A more valid statement is that the whole passage savors of the *précieuse* love vocabulary and procedure, especially from 1401 to 1408, but this part is taken from *Don Garcie de Navarre*, 804–811. For other *précieuse* language used by Célimène see notes 505–506, 1629–1635.

1402. **peut se résoudre:** the corresponding verse in *Don Garcie de Navarre* has « se peut résoudre. » This difference shows that Molière was beginning to waver between the two positions of the pronoun and perhaps to prefer the modern use; cf. note 16.

1407. **coupable:** the tables are now completely turned on Alceste when she can thus brazenly use this word of him.

1408. **après de grands combats:** from a woman who flirts as freely as Célimène is proved in Act V to do, this is indeed a remarkable statement.

1410. **l'on** is again **je.**

1411. 'I am thoroughly vexed at my simplicity.' In *Don Garcie de Navarre* Done Elvire says, 729:

> . . . Je me veux mal d'une telle faiblesse.

1414. 'And give you a true cause for complaint'; she will in Act V! **sujet de plainte** is also used 1301 and **lieu de plainte** in 301.

1415. **mon faible;** cf. note 230.

1416. **sans doute** was then equivalent to certainty.

1418. **A votre foi:** Lanson-Mornet and Gache both say that **foi** here means **amour;** the phrase then would signify either 'to your love' or 'to my love for you.' In favor of this meaning both editors quote verse 232 of *l'Ecole des Maris:*

Je veux m'abandonner à la foi de ma femme.

toute: adverb of intensity; for its agreement cf. note 390.

1419–1420. A thought similar to 197–200.

1422–1432. The general thought of this passage may be found in *Don Garcie de Navarre,* 217–226 but the verses of *Le Misanthrope* are infinitely better. The warmth and depth of Alceste's words should be contrasted with the coldness, artificiality and *préciosité* of Célimène's, 1391–1414. Yet some critics, Leys for instance, see largely a selfish purpose of Alceste to bind Célimène to himself. Even so, is it not the essence of love to wish to give all and enjoy all in return?

1426. **en un sort** = modern **à un sort; en** is used to avoid the hiatus of *à un.*

1427. **en naissant = à votre naissance;** another *anacoluthon* quite common in the seventeenth century; cf. note 23. Note unusual, hence, emphatic, position of **rien.**

1430. **vous** is indirect object.

1431. **que** repeats **afin que** of 1429.

1432. **des mains de mon amour;** cf. note 1388.

1435. Célimène would jest; hence she speaks of Du Bois as « monsieur. »

plaisamment figuré: 'oddly rigged-out'; Du Bois is dressed as a courier, ready for a long journey and with high boots on; his comical appearance is accentuated by his frightened look; all of this is suggested in the phrase.

1436–1480. As a foil to the serious, tense scene just played, Molière gives us the relief of the burlesque appearance of Du Bois whose name is in itself funny, "wooden-head" [!] It is the only low-comedy scene of the play, and as such was criticized as too burlesque by J. J. Rousseau who thought Alceste's angry treatment of his servant inconsistent with his character. Here again

may we remark Rousseau's lack of a sense of humor. Alceste's anger is thoroughly justified. Du Bois, besides being stupid, has interrupted him at a most inopportune moment. All fair critics appreciate the scene as excellent comedy. Despois called it « d'un comique parfait, » declaring that it reposes us, « et nous laisse sous l'impression qui doit dominer dans toute comédie. » There is a similar scene in *Les Fâcheux* (Act II, Scene iii), and Molière may also have used Act II, Scene vii of Quinault's *l'Amant indiscret ou le Maître étourdi*, 1654 in which there is a like episode of a letter that cannot be found by its messenger, Carpalin.

1436–1446. Another case of rapid dialogue; cf. note 442–446.

1437. **Voici bien des mystères:** Du Bois maintains a deeply mysterious air throughout the scene which greatly increases the comic effect.

1438. **nous . . . nos:** Molière's servants often show the identity of their interests with their masters'.

1441. **faire retraite:** Du Bois is evidently an old soldier and uses military expressions; cf. **déloger sans trompette,** 1442, **plier bagage,** 1446.

1442. **déloger sans trompette:** 'steal away quickly and quietly,' 'decamp.'

1447. **je te casserai la tête:** another suggestion of harsh treatment of servants (cf. note 940) but not to be taken literally; Alceste is exasperated; still we are both surprised and amused at his angry threat.

1449. **noir d'habit:** the bailiffs wore black; cf. *au noir jupon* (verse 1767 of *Le Tartuffe*).

1451. Probably some legal summons connected with the loss of his law-suit, 1499.

1454. **n'y verrait goutte:** 'wouldn't make head nor tail of it.'

1458. **vous vient rendre visite:** cf. note 16.

1471. **Que peut envelopper ceci:** 'What is behind all this?'

1472. **en = ceci** above.

1473. **impertinent au diable:** 'you devilish fool' cf. note 334.

1475. **qui me tient:** 'what restrains me,' i.e. from carrying out his threat of 1447.

1477–1480. This is the fourth failure, one in each act, to reach

an understanding with Célimène. Each failure has its element of humor. The totality of his visits to her is somewhat of a strain upon the unity of time. The fifth and last attempt will also end in failure, but it is tragic. Alceste will be on-stage the entire fifth act except the last two verses. These successive visits are in themselves excellent proof of the depth of his love. Cf. note 531.

1478. Molière often omitted the *ne* usually found in the subordinate clause after **empêcher.**

1479. **en** = **sort,** 1477.

1480. **avant la fin du jour:** another indication that the unity of time is being observed; cf. note 563.

ACT V

1481. 'My mind is made up.' **en** refers vaguely to the situation.

1482. The second **il** = **coup.**

1484. **de ce que je dis** belongs after **détourner.** Position of **me;** cf. note 16.

1490. **la foi de mon droit:** 'trust in my legal rights'; cf. 187–189.

1493. W. Mangold, in *Molieres Tartuffe: Geschichte und Kritik* (Oppelm, 1881) p. 108, thinks that this « traître » is a poetical representation of those who hypocritically attacked Molière for his *Tartuffe* and secured an edict against its performance. This seems plausible in view of the fact that this edict was still in force when *Le Misanthrope* was first played in 1666 and until 1669. Possibly also such an opinion might lend strength to Grimarest's statement regarding the « livre abominable » of 1501. See note 1501.

1494. **d':** 'by means of.'

1496. **égorgeant:** an exaggeration due to Alceste's great anger.

1497. **Le poids de sa grimace:** a bold and effective figure as if his « grimace » had turned the scales of justice; for **grimace** cf. 125–128, 137–138.

1498. **tourne la justice:** 'thwarts justice'; **justice** may also mean the administrators of justice.

1499. Note the rhyme within the verse: **arrêt: forfait.**

1500–1504. An awkward piece of syntax, yet, strange to say, perfectly clear to the auditor. **non content** modifies **le fourbe** in 1504 (or perhaps **il** of 1499) to whom **l'on** of 1500 also probably refers. The **il** of 1501 is 'there.'

1501. Grimarest in his often untrustworthy biography of Molière makes the following statement which it is impossible to verify:

> Les hypocrites avaient été tellement irrités par *Le Tartuffe* que l'on fit courir dans Paris un livre terrible que l'on mettait sur le compte de Molière pour le perdre. C'est à cette occasion qu'il mit dans *Le Misanthrope* le vers suivant:
>
> Il court parmi le monde un livre abominable.

Louis Ménard republished in 1883 (Paris, Didot, two volumes) a book which he thought was this « livre abominable », but it is extremely unlikely that there is any connection between this book and the history of Molière's two plays (Boully).

1502. **de qui = duquel** or **dont.** *qui* now refers only to persons. In 1504 is **dont,** used with modern correctness; cf. notes 626, 1676. The emphasis of **même,** 'even' belongs with **lecture.**

1503. **dernière rigueur:** burning may be meant; this had occurred in France very recently, Claude Petit having been hanged and then burned at Paris, 1665, for writing licentious and impious songs.

1505–1516. Compare Alceste's earlier opinion of Oronte, 1146–1151. Oronte has certainly been faithless to the reconciliation effected by the Marshalls' Court, 1161–1162. J. J. Rousseau failed to appreciate this point when he criticized this passage. Oronte's conduct reveals a mean character, the meanest of all the persons in the play.

1508. **qu'être:** now **que d'être.**

1509–1510. Note how far from its modern position **me** stands; it now would have to precede **demander;** cf. note 16.

1514. **le voilà:** cf. note 1348.

1516. **pour:** for construction cf. note 120–121.

1518. **gloire:** cf. note 1017.

1521. **c'est trop souffrir:** 'there's a limit to enduring.' Cf. note 566. **nous** really means himself.

1522. **tirons-nous** is not a plural in meaning: 'I'll withdraw from this den of thieves and cut-throats.' **bois** is figurative for a dangerous place.

1525. **un peu bien:** 'just a little.'

1527. Refers to 1500–1504.

1533. **aventure:** 'affair,' subject of **nuise.**

1534. **en:** 'because of it (**aventure**).'

1540. **non:** cf. note 41.

1540–1550. Quite consistent with his attitude in Act I (182–202). In short Alceste seems to love justice, even for himself, less than the pleasure of hating mankind, that injustice affords him; in this he is plainly eccentric or off-centre, and hence a comic character. Mangold again calls attention to the applicability of these verses to the author's vexation because of the forbidding of *Le Tartuffe*, which had caused him great financial loss. Cf. note 1493.

1547. J. J. Rousseau considered childish and inconsistent this giving a monetary value to Alceste's right to condemn humanity. Again Rousseau fails to see the humor of the situation or to realize that Alceste is not a philosopher but a real human being, as Molière intended.

il = arrêt, 1541. **en:** idiomatic and so vague as to be untranslatable. **pourra:** the future suggests probability.

1555. Same verse as 1368. Gache cites this and other instances of repetition as proof that the fifth act was hastily written. Cf. notes 1700, 1748–1759.

1559. **est-ce . . . que:** cf. note 58. **peu d'équité:** 'slight sense of justice.'

1565–1566. The interesting idea that virtue, to be virtue, must co-exist with vice.

1567. **en met l'usage:** 'employs them (**vertus,** 1566).' **sans ennui:** 'cheerfully.'

1568. 'to endure the injustice of others when we are in the right.'

1575. i.e. he could not avoid speaking.

1576. **sur les bras:** cf. note 440. 'I would get involved in a hundred quarrels, (like that with Oronte).

1579. Cf. 237 and its note; also 1778–1784.

1580. **m'en faire foi:** 'give me proof of it.'

1583. Position of **me:** cf. note 835.

1584. An excellent symbolic summing-up of Alceste's character and state of mind. He is a lonely man, and the tragedy of his life is that he cannot escape this **coin sombre** or his **noir chagrin.**

Note again the well-motivated withdrawal of Philinte to bring Eliante. As Alceste has gone to his 'gloomy corner,' he is not perceived by Oronte or Célimène who otherwise would not have continued talking about him.

1587. **de voir:** Molière was not consistent in his use of *de* or *à;* in 810–812 we have **à** in the same construction, which is now correct. The present rule was then not established.

1592–1593. **le** and **en** refer to **vous émouvoir,** 1591.

1594. **vous** is probably the direct object of **prétendre;** cf. note 266, another instance of this verb being transitive at that time; yet in 1615 we have **y** (= *à Célimène*) with the same verb.

1597. Célimène knows perfectly well, for Philinte had told her, 755–757, but as usual she is trying to escape an issue by asking questions and playing one admirer against another. Oronte earns our respect by refusing to discuss anything except the matter before them.

1598. **à qui: tant** is the direct object of the verb-complex **j'ai . . . vu parler,** hence another object may only be indirect; cf. note 1161–1162. However we would today more probably have **que** here, since such a complex with *voir* or *entendre* is not always treated like one with *faire.*

1599. 'Such explanations are not necessary.'

1607. **ne sont plus:** cf. note 60. 'This matter cannot be postponed longer.'

1608. **expliquer votre cœur:** cf. **expliquer votre âme** in 562.

1613–1623. An excellent example of stichomythia, or dialogue in which each interlocutor utters but one verse.

1615. Cf. notes 266, 1594.

1623–1636. Livet remarks:

A la représentation Célimène s'applique à rester dans l'équivoque en laissant croire à chacun par son jeu, par ses regards, qu'il est le préféré.

1628. This does not agree very well with her remarks, 1401–1408, especially 1408.

1629–1635. We have here another instance of *précieuse* language and procedure; cf. last part of note 1397–1408.

1629. Furetière says that **gêne** connoted the stronger, etymological meaning of 'torture,' but here the meaning 'deep embarrassment' seems sufficient.

1634. Cf. note 96.

1640. **rien** probably means 'anybody.'

1641. A statement amply justified; cf. 457–460, 465–474, 549–550.

1646. 'And I shall consider my worst suspicions confirmed.' **en = silence,** 1643.

1647. **Je vous sais fort bon gré:** 'I am very greatly obliged to you.'

1654. **y:** i.e. to persecute her.

1659. Note that Célimène will not speak again until verse 1736 after her complete discomfiture, when all her suitors except Alceste have abandoned her. This is a total of 77 verses plus the two letters. This long silence is dramatically very significant in a character hitherto so clever and ready a talker.

1661. **y = me** above. **adressée** is a reflexive verb, as shown by its auxiliary **être;** it should have the reflexive *vous* before the **être;** this would have brought two *vous* together; so Molière omitted the reflexive pronoun as he did in other cases; cf. note 1031. This was possible in the seventeenth century.

1664. **ici:** i.e. by Eliante or others.

1665. **lâcher la balance:** as if Célimène were holding the scales to prevent their registering the weight and to make them appear equal. She had just declared, but evasively, 1625–1628, that it was not her heart « qui balance. »

1669. Acaste, as the most vain (cf. Act II, Scene i), feels the most injured; hence he is the chief speaker in what follows; hence also the mercilessness of his attack.

1673–1682. Compare this hypocritical speech with that in Act III, Scene v, especially 1675–1679 with 878–896. Arsinoé is only too glad of this opportunity to gloat in triumph.

1673. **surprise:** because of their quarrel in Act III, Scene iv.

1676. **à qui:** now **auquel;** cf. notes 626, 1502.

1678. Compare 894–896 and Célimène's repetition of the same idea, 945–946.

1679. **leurs** = Acaste and Clitandre.

1680. **de petits discords:** an ironical reference to her last visit, Act III, Scene v. **discords** was already almost obsolete at that time, and perhaps Molière uses it here as a deft thrust at Arsinoé's age; cf. note 901.

1685–1686. The two letters were not missent, as some think. They reached their proper addresses. The two marquis have simply exchanged letters after comparing them. It is far more humorous for each to read the letter addressed to the other instead of the one addressed to himself. See notes 824, 830–832.

1688–1689. Oronte will admit this in 1700.

1690. **de le lire** for modern **qu'on le lise.**

It was usually the custom in verse-comedies to have letters in prose and Molière has such letters in *L'Ecole des Maris*, *L'Ecole des Femmes* and in *Les Femmes Savantes*. In his earlier verse-comedies, however, letters are in verse also.

1690, 1. **Clitandre** was not in the earliest edition, but appeared first in that of 1782. Most editors, therefore, omit the name. However clarity is helped if the name is added.

1690, 2. **enjouement:** 'gaiety,' 'joyousness'; Célimène gives her conduct a favorable name.

1690, 3. **ai:** we should expect *aie* but in the seventeenth century the rule was not so strict; cf. note 1056. **que lorsque:** 'as when.'

1690, 9. **Notre grand flandrin de vicomte,** who does not appear in the play, raises the number of her suitors to five! **flandrin:** 'bean-pole'; related to Flanders whose men were tall, lanky and awkward. Grimarest states, again without evidence, that contemporary gossip assigned this description to the Comte de Guiche who admired Molière's wife (cf. however note 476). Grimarest also states that the friends of the count, especially Henriette d'Angleterre, endeavored to have the passage removed because of the inelegance of the expression **cracher dans un puits** (1690, 12.) but that Louis XIV told Molière to leave the passage as it was.

1690, 12. **cracher dans un puits pour faire des ronds:** apparently the only other uses of this unpleasant word **cracher** by Molière are in *Le Médecin malgré lui* (Act I, Scene v):

Sganarelle (*se tournant vers Lucas en crachant*). Vous, marchez là-dessus, par ordonnance du médecin.

and in *Les Femmes Savantes* (75–76):

Et ce n'est point du tout la prendre pour modèle,
Ma sœur, que de tousser et de *cracher* comme elle.

The first use is by a vulgar fellow, the second by a bourgeoise. The word does seem out of place when used of a nobleman, but perhaps Molière wished to express his contempt for the idle courtier who had nothing better to do than **cracher dans un puits.**

In the mediæval *Sermon des Fous* (Viollet le Duc, *Ancien Théâtre Français*, Vol. II) the fool « qui crache en un puits » is given emphasis as the biggest fool.

1690, 16. **tint la main:** i.e. while escorting her. Cf. note 1128. No undue familiarity is meant here.

1690, 19. **qui n'ont que la cape et l'épée:** 'which are very poor indeed.' The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie* defines thus: « n'avoir qu'un mérite apparent et superficiel. » The expression has its origin in the idea of the poor noblemen, especially the younger sons, who have only their swords and capes to support their grandeur. Thirion says that this is the first instance of this expression in a figurative use, and that it had its origin among the *précieuses*.

1690, 20. **l'homme aux rubans verts:** an expression that has become famous in reference to Alceste, and also to Molière himself. Green was the favorite color of Molière, and also of his wife, for their costumes, judging by the inventory of their stage wardrobe. Blue and red shades were the usual colors worn by the other actors. The costume of Alceste consisted of breeches and jacket of a gold-colored greyish-striped brocade, lined with tabby, and ornamented with green ribbons on the right shoulder. The waistcoat was of gold brocade. Silk stockings and garters matched. A sword and a staff, adorned with ribbons, completed his outfit. Off-stage Molière wore sombre colors.

An interesting article by Alfred Copin in *Le Moliériste* (I, 118) lists the costumes of Molière in many of his plays and shows the predominance of green. This was also his favorite color in the decorations of his home.

1690, 21–25. Especially worthy of note is this opinion of Alceste from the woman who said she loved him!

1690, 25. **l'homme à la veste:** the **veste** was much like a modern vest, but shorter, usually without pockets, and often of most exaggerated colors especially for such affected, foppish men as Oronte. About 1682 this garment passed out of style, and the edition of that year has in place of **l'homme à la veste,** « l'homme au sonnet. »

1690, 27. **votre paquet:** *faire un paquet sur quelqu'un* means to tell slanderous gossip about a person; *donner à quelqu'un son paquet* to silence a person by some sharp remark (Eggert).

1690, 28. **qui s'est jeté dans le bel esprit:** 'who has gone in strong for wit.' The expression is suggestive of the violence and difficulty of the attempt.

1690, 31. **sa prose:** i.e. his conversation. Célimène and Alceste agree at least in this appreciation of Oronte's verses!

1690, 32. **mettez-vous . . . en tête:** literally 'get it into your head'; 'realize.'

1690, 34. **je vous trouve à dire:** 'I miss you.' Furetière says « Trouver à dire signifie manquer: Quand cet homme manque à l'assemblée, on le trouve bien à dire, on le regrette. » The Academy Dictionary of 1694 has: « trouver à dire signifie ‹ trouver qu'il manque quelque-chose › ». Thus the expression could be applied to things as well as persons, and it is still current in some of the provinces of France. See the excellent notes on this idiomatic phrase in Boully and Lanson-Mornet. See also Littré's *Dictionnaire* under « dire No. 13 » with examples for the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; likewise Livet's *Lexique* (Vol. II, pp. 87–88). The origin of this strange expression is as yet not satisfactorily explained.

1690, 35–37. **c'est . . . que la présence: présence** is the logical subject of the sentence; cf. note 58.

1690, 38. **me voici maintenant, moi:** 'It's my turn now.' Note that the other short remarks of Acaste, 1690, 8, 21, 27, are

half verses (six syllables each); for this reason the 1734 and some other editions dropped the **moi** of this line which made a seventh syllable.

1690, 39. **Votre** and **vous** refer to Acaste whose letter Clitandre now reads.

1690, 40. **doucereux:** Furetière says: « *Faire le doucereux*, c'est faire l'amoureux, le languissant auprès d'une dame; » i.e. to be foolishly sentimental, honeyed, "mushy," 'to play the love-sick one,' 'to abound in sweet compliments'; cf. Alceste's long criticism of Clitandre, 475–488. He is the complete ladies' man. See 650, 695–696, and 847 for examples of his sugary conduct.

1690, 42. In **vous l'êtes** the **l'** refers to **extravagant** above.

1690, 44. **contre les siens:** i.e. Clitandre's idea **qu'on l'aime.** This is Célimène's usual veiled way of saying that she loves Acaste.

1690, 45. **voyez-moi = venez me voir.**

1690, 46. **d'en être obsédée:** ' to be bored (or beset) by him (Clitandre).'

1692. **cela s'appelle:** 'what its name is.' Editors have differed widely just what name to apply to Célimène. Perhaps "deceitful flirt" is as mild as she deserves.

1694. **portrait:** as suggested by her two letters.

1695. **J'aurais de quoi vous dire:** 'I could readily find plenty to say to you.'

1697. **petits marquis** shows his resentment at having been called one by Célimène, 1690, 14–16. His speech here fits perfectly with his self-revealed character in Act III, Scene i, especially 800–822.

1698. A variant in the 1682 and 1734 editions, « de plus haut », reduces the adjective to the comparative; the superlative is better in view of Acaste's vanity as a heart-breaker.

1699–1706. These eight verses are usually omitted in performances. They are important, however, as revealing on what intimate terms Oronte had been with Célimène, and as justifying Alceste in his suspicions. We are now quite convinced that the unread letter of Act IV, Scene iii, first mentioned in 1237, was really to Oronte.

1700. **vu** would today be **vue** to agree with **vous** (= Célimène),

but in the seventeenth century the agreement was not shown if an infinitive followed.

The repeated use of *voir* (1697, 1699, 1700) and of *faire* (1697, 1704 twice, 1707) shows haste of composition; cf. notes 1555, 1748–1759.

1702. **à tout le genre humain:** cf. Alceste's similar reproaches, 458 ff., 468–474, 496, 507–508, 1281–1284.

1705. **un cœur:** i.e. his own. Oronte remains the stilted sonnet-writer of Act I, fond of antitheses and *pointes*. His idea that Célimène is the loser in losing him shows his conceit to the very end.

1708. Another ternary verse; cf. note 574. **conclure affaire** is a very scornful expression, suggesting a commercial transaction: 'finish your business.'

1710. Cf. note 16 for position of the pronouns **m'en. émouvoir:** 'stirred to indignation.'

1713. 'whom your good fortune drew to you.'

1719. Variant in 1674 edition: *plaindre ici sa querelle.*

1723, 1724, 1728. **on** is of course only a thin disguise for herself; as is clearly seen syntactically in the feminine agreement of **empressée** (1724) and **éprise** (1728). The whole passage (1723–1732) is just an angry explosion at her failure to win Alceste to whom she had offered herself in 1131–1132. It should be contrasted with her previously expressed high opinion of him, Act III, Scene v. Leys says here: « Elle restera vieille fille. » Arsinoé's words are like those of Armande under like circumstances in *Les Femmes Savantes*, Act I, Scene ii (179–180, 190–191).

1726. **créance:** this spelling represented the court pronunciation of both *créance* and *croyance* at that time, and the latter word almost disappeared. Today *croyance* is restricted to religious belief and *créance* is used chiefly in the financial and commercial sense of 'credential', 'confidence' or 'credit'.

peut s'être flatté: one of the instances where the pronoun is in the modern position; cf. note 16.

1727. To judge by Alceste's use of **le rebut d'un cœur** in 1794, he had been hurt to the quick by Arsinoé's **le rebut de madame.** Perhaps, however, we have in this coincidence merely another instance of negligence of style; cf. notes 1555, 1700.

1729. **le** refers to the idea of the head; the figure comes from a proud and spirited horse tossing its head; see notes 347, 1133.

1732. Arsinoé decamps viciously. Note with what excellent motivation Molière has withdrawn the subordinate characters, leaving four principals. Of these, two love mutually, and for them happiness is certain. The other two have characters that prevent such happiness. Against this background Alceste stands out in tragic gloom.

1737. The first **en** is the pronoun and refers vaguely to the whole situation; it anticipates and strengthens what follows.

1737. **de me reprocher** is equivalent to (*lors*)*que vous me reprocherez.* By this free shifting of constructions Molière secures flexibility of style. Cf. note 120–121.

1742. **crime:** cf. note 1385.

1745. **j'ai pu:** 'I was capable of.'

1747. **le puis-je, traîtresse?** Pyrrhus in like circumstance will say (Racine's *Andromaque*, 343):

Et le puis-je, Madame?

1748–1759. The repetition of **tendresse** in the rhyme so close together (1748, 1751) and similarly of **faiblesse** (1752, 1759) should be noted as unmistakable evidence of carelessness of composition. As already stated in note 1555, the whole fifth act was hastily written. Cf. also note 1700. For **faiblesse** see note 230.

1749. **avec ardeur:** 'with all my soul,' modifies **veuille**, not **haïr.**

1750. **trouvé-je:** in the interrogative form of the first person singular present indicative of the first conjugation, the final mute *e* must be given accented value, otherwise we would have two mute *e* in adjacent syllables. The French language does not permit this. The phenomenon is similar to giving a grave accent to *mène*, etc. (from *mener*) and to such feminines as *première* from *premier*, etc.

1751. **ce que peut . . . tendresse:** 'the power of an unworthy love.'

1754. **la** = **faiblesse**, 1752.

1755. **sages** belongs in prose after **nomme.**

1756. **il est toujours de l'homme:** 'there is always some human weakness.'

1759. **me:** ethical dative; 'as far as I am concerned.' Cf. **moi** in 1387.

1760. **le vice du temps:** same phrase in 234; he still has hope of curing her.

1761. **votre cœur . . . donner les mains:** cf. note 1388.

1762–1763. He has spoken of this idea repeatedly throughout the day; cf. 95–96, 143–144, 1486, 1522–1524, and especially 1578. In 1805 he will go to his « désert » alone, but he calls it « un endroit écarté. » See also note 144.

The use of **j'ai fait** so close together may be another negligence of style or may be due to Alceste's agitation. Molière has often been accused of having a bad style, but his critics forget that his main thought was to have his characters talk like real persons.

1763. **que** repeats **pourvu que** of 1761 and its verb is therefore in the subjunctive, **soyez,** 1764. Cf. note 395.

1769–1770. The crucial word here is **monde.** She is so selfish that she is probably incapable of sacrifice and hence is incapable of love. Compare her similar inability to comprehend what love means in her flippant reply to Alceste 1433–1435.

1771. More *précieuse* words: **feux** and **flamme.** See also 1790: **l'honneur de vos fers.** Such expressions were then too current to be avoided. **s'il faut que:** 'if really.' Cf. notes 169, 1199 for similar weak use of *s'il faut.*

1772. **que vous doit importer:** 'of what importance to you?'

1774. **vingt ans:** *see* 984 and note 225.

1774–1779. Note the total absence of romance in Célimène's nature. Alceste has shown that he has a great deal of it. If she had been able to say truthfully « mon cœur » instead of **ma main,** we would have a different ending to the play, but this ending would have spoiled it. While elsewhere Molière has happy endings to his plays, here it is impossible.

1779. **non:** the most vigorous and dramatic **non** in the play, for it decides the issue. Alceste will not go through the mere form of a marriage. Convinced now that Célimène does not love him, since she is unwilling to make any sacrifice of her worldliness for him, he remains true to what he had said to Philinte in 237,

that he would not love her if he did not believe she loved him. Moreover he had said in 1578 that she must consent to his plan to live in seclusion, where he hoped to cure her of her folly.

1781–1782. **vous n'êtes point . . . pour:** supply *faite, prête, désireuse* or some similar word; cf. same construction 60, 260, 673, 1607; see note 60.

1783. Saint-Marc-Girardin, the celebrated critic, greatly admired this verse likening it to a dagger-thrust or a cup of poison in its tragic power.

outrage: it is an open question how much Alceste's offended pride affected his decision. Leys is one of the critics who ascribe much here to this aspect of Alceste's character. However one cannot emphasize this element too strongly without dragging Alceste down to the level of Oronte and Arsinoé. Surely Molière had no such intention.

1784. **pour jamais:** many have doubted if Alceste could ever cease to love Célimène and the sequels of the play are based upon this doubt. The exit of Célimène has been called « le moment le plus délicat » of the rôle. It requires consummate skill to show the various shades of her feelings as she waits for some word from Alceste, then realizes that all is over, and summons her pride to cover her defeat. In all this the fan has an important share. The exit of Mlle Mars was so remarkable that its tradition has lasted until the present day in the stage-directions.

1785–1795. See note 1252–1258.

1786. **de la sincérité:** the compliment is well-merited for Eliante is the only character in the play who measures up to the high standard of Alceste and ourselves.

1792–1795. The four **que** and the **qui** make the passage somewhat heavy.

1793–1794. **ce serait . . . que:** cf. note 58.

1794. **le rebut d'un cœur:** 'the refusal by a heart' (i.e. Célimène's). Thirion remarks here:

> Alceste reprend avec une humilité touchante les termes injurieux dont s'était servi le dépit d'Arsinoé.

Cf. note 1727.

1795. **suivre:** 'follow out,' 'carry out.'

1797–1798. **sans trop m'inquiéter = sans que je m'en inquiète trop;** another *anacoluthon;* cf. note 23. Notice the delicate playfulness of Eliante's words. She is actually proposing to Philinte on the basis of his words 1207–1216. **si je l'en priais:** 'if I asked him to do so.'

1805–1806. The whole weakness of Alceste consists of his inability to get along with his fellow men. A change of place will not change his heart. Moreover of what use is a man of honor living away off by himself and thus depriving the world of his example? According to the critic Nisard, each character, with the exception of Eliante and Philinte who alone attain happiness, receives merited punishment. The gallants Acaste and Clitandre have been exposed by Célimène who in the end is deservedly humbled by them. Arsinoé was angling for Alceste, and we rejoice at her failure to win him. Alceste is punished because of his 'holier than thou' attitude. In recompense, however, he escapes from Célimène who could never have made him happy, retains our respect and wins our sympathy.

1807–1808. Philinte remains the faithful friend to the very end. Recall his words at the end of Act I: « Je ne vous quitte pas. », also the many manifestations of his concern for Alceste's welfare, especially his accompanying him to the Marshalls' Court. Had Alceste followed Philinte's sound advice, he would have been a happier man. These final words leave us in the hope that Alceste may yet be rescued from his unhappy mood and enjoy finally the « vrais contentements » which he had wished for Philinte and Eliante.

VOCABULARY

d, following a verse-number, indicates 'stage-direction' at that point.

A

à, to; at; — **l'instant**, instantly; — **son âge**, at her age (82); — **présent**, at the present time (*in* (220) the present time, today); according to (13); judging by (455, 1179); on (280); suitable for, capable of (90, 335, 1011); **noire** — **faire peur** (718), dark enough to frighten one; in: — **leurs yeux** (112), in their eyes, in their opinion; of: **veut aux mortels** (155), demands of mortals; *indicates emphatic possession:* — **lui** (240), his; — **vous** (293), yours; **à** *had a much wider use than now, often taking the place of modern* **avec** (1604); *of* **dans** *or* **en** (357, 639, 645, 1536); *of* **de** (810, 861, 899, 1300); *of* **devant** *or* **sous** (359); *of* **chez** (155); *of* **pour**, *especially before infinitives* (354, 518, 792, 793, 1036, 1684); — **peine** (22), scarcely; — **plein** (125, 1543), fully, completely; — **la mode** (42), fashionable; — **propos** (77), fitting; **veux mal** — **ma simplicité** (1411), am vexed with, angry at my foolishness; *before infinitive* = **en** *with present participle:* — **conter** (86), in, *or* by, telling.

s'abaisser, to lower, demean, debase oneself.

abandonné, deserted (859); wrapt up in (1418).

s'abandonner, to sacrifice itself, yield, give up, abandon itself (1170).

abhorrer, to loathe, detest, abhor (1767).

abominable, villainous, detestable, wretched, abominable (1501).

abonder, to be full (of), abound (in) (589).

abord, *m.*, beginning; **dès le premier** — (1303), from the very beginning; **d'** —, at once, right off, immediately (572).

abrégé, *m.*, epitome, abridgment (724).

absence, *f.*, absence.

abus, *m.*, misuse, abuse.

abuser, to deceive; **s'**—, to be mistaken, deceived.

Acaste, *m.*, *portrait of, by himself* (781–804); *by Célimène* (539–548, 1690, 15–19).

accabler, to overwhelm, load heavily, heap upon, crush (1222, 1385, 1513).

accepter, to accept.

accès, *m.*, entrance, welcome, access (458); **noirs** — (98), gloomy fits; fits of spleen.

accommodement, *m.*, adjustment, reconciliation (760); compromise (1134).

s'**accommoder, de** (460), to put up with, endure, consent to.

accompagner, to escort.

accompli, cultured.

accord, *m.*, agreement; **tomber (demeurer) d'—** (de) (190, 840, 899, 1140, 1368, 1555, 1742), to agree (with, upon), admit.

s'**accorder à** (1604), to agree with, harmonize with.

accoutumer, to accustom, train.

accrocher, to hook, catch, angle for, ensnare (856).

accroire, faire — à, to lead one to believe (*sometimes by deceitful means*).

accueil, *m.*, welcome (468).

accueillir, to welcome, receive.

accuser, to accuse, indict, brand (1334).

acheter, to purchase, pay for (1016).

achevé, complete; **ridicule —** (568), consummate idiot.

achever (470), to complete, finish.

s'**acquérir** (480), to win, acquire.

acte, *m.*, act.

acteur, *m.*, actor.

action, *f.*, deed, conduct, action.

activité, *f.*, vigor, activity.

adieu, *m.*, farewell, goodbye, 1444.

admettre, to allow, permit, admit.

admirable, worthy of admiration (333); wonderful, admirable (650).

admirer, to applaud, admire (391); marvel at (1285).

adorable, lovely, adorable.

adouci, calm (1683).

adoucir, to soften, moderate, quiet (1157).

Adraste, *m., portrait of, by Célimène* (617–622).

adresse, *f.*, skill (1150).

adresser, to direct; s'— (261, 658), to be addressed, directed; **mal adressée** (1661), wrongly directed.

adroit, skilful, clever, dexterous, adroit (797).

adversaire, *m.*, enemy, opponent (1514).

affable, over-courteous, amiable (45).

affaire, *f.*, affair of honor, duel (789); need, matter, affair; business (440, 588); quarrel, trouble (537); *see notes* 246, 554, 1086; **faire une —** (537), to get into difficulties, have a quarrel.

affairé, busy (588).

affamé, hungry, ravenous, bloodthirsty (177).

affectation, *f.*, assumption (927); affectation (387).

affecter, to assume, affect, pretend (1386); *rechercher avec affectation* (42).

affection, *f.*, inclination, love, fondness.

affliger, to pain, afflict (1109).

affranchir, to free, release; s'—, free itself (1248).

affreu–x, –se, fearful (862).

afin de, (in order) to (441).
afin que, so that (1429).
âge, *m.*, time, age; **des vieux âges** (153), of olden time.
agir, to act; **façons d'—** (448, 1163), behavior, ways, conduct; **il s'agit** (1600), the question is.
agréable, pleasant, agreeable; **d'— humeur** (727), good-natured, good-humored; **d'avoir pour —** (30), to consent, permit, agree.
agréer, to consent, accept, approve.
aider, to help (1513).
aigre, bitter, acrid, sharp (933).
aigreur, *f.*, harshness, bitterness (963).
ailleurs, elsewhere (805); **d'ailleurs** (547), from other persons, besides, in addition.
aimable, lovable (462, 714).
aimée, *f.* (1266), belovèd, sweetheart.
aimer, to love (208, 503); **— mieux,** to prefer; **faire —,** to cause to love; **se faire —** (232), to be loved, i.e. I love her.
ainsi, thus, so (304); **— que,** as, just as (491), as well as (1059).
air, *m.*, manner (900); fashion (48); atmosphere (1084); appearance (1436); audacity, assurance, bearing (1351); **de mon —,** like me (815); **porter un —** (572), to have an appearance; **bon —,** distinction, an elegant exterior (797).
aisé, easy; **assez —** (1120), just as easy.
aisément, readily, easily, quickly (907, 1040).
ajouter, to add, join, increase; **— foi à,** to believe, credit.
ajuster, to settle, conciliate, reconcile, straighten out (1355); *see note* 839.
s'**alarmer,** to be anxious, alarmed, take alarm (1290).
Alceste, *m., portrait of, by himself* (299–300, 1081–1090); *by Célimène* (669–680, 1690, 22–25); *by Philinte* (683–686, 1133–1162, 1169–1174); *by Arsinoé* (1045–1052, 1065–1068); *by Eliante* (1163–1168).
aller, to go; **s'en aller,** *for modern* **aller** (312, 392, 1034, 1583); *with infinitive as near future* (1126); *as an auxiliary after* **si,** should (303); **— mieux** (160), to be better; **voilà qui va** (374), that sounds; **allons!** come on, come, well, come now (651, 759, 768, 1807); **allez!** why! ah! come now! really, truly, indeed (14); **y va-t-il de sa gloire?** (1142), is his honor at stake?
alors, in that case, then, now; **— que = lorsque,** when (332).
amant, *m.*, suitor, admirer, lover (*see, however, note* 459); **faire des —s** (461), to win lovers.
amas, *m.*, mass, heap, profusion (484).
ambigu, of double meaning, ambiguous; *see note* 930.

ambitieu–x, –se, aspiring, ambitious.

ambition, *f.*, ambition.

âme, *f.*, soul, person; man (1133); **tendresse d'—** (866), weakness, inclination, fondness; **du meilleur de mon —** (1214), from my inmost soul.

amener, to bring (873).

ami, *m.*, **amie,** *f.*, friend.

amitié, *f.*, friendship; love (238); liking (1690, 41).

amorti, withered, dead, dulled, gone (980).

amour, *m.*, love; **avoir de l'— pour** (944), to love.

amoureu–x, –se, lovable, amorous (333).

ample, full, wide.

amusement, *m.*, pastime, diversion, amusement (348); trifling, postponement, waste of time, dallying, delay (1440, 1642).

amuser, to trifle with, toy with, keep putting off, dally with; *see note* 218.

an, *m.*, year; **jeunes —s** (980), youth.

apercevcir, to perceive.

apparence, *f.*, appearances (1241).

appartenir, to belong (642).

appas, *m.*, attraction, charm, delight, temptation (663).

appeler, to call; **s'—** (1692), to be called.

applaudir, to approve, encourage, applaud (664); welcome, flatter (1305).

appréhender, to fear, dread (1637).

apprendre, to tell, inform (918).

approche, *f.*, contact, association, approach (144).

approcher, to bring near.

approuver, to like, approve, applaud (425, 756).

appui, *m.*, standing, support (547, 1091).

appuyer, to support, base, ground (478); spread, give authority to (1506).

après, after, afterwards; **— que** (736), after.

ardent, eager, ardent.

ardeur, *f.*, eagerness, passion, ardor, love (227); **vouloir avec —** (1749), to try with all my might.

aride, dry, sterile, barren.

arme, *f.*, weapon, arm; **rendre les —s** (469), to surrender, pay homage; **prendre les —s** (678), to take up arms.

s'armer, to arm itself (1379).

arrêt, *m.*, decree, decision, sentence, judgment (31, 1499, 1644).

arrêter, to stop, remain, stay (1031) (*for modern* ***s'arrêter***); to arrest (*as a criminal*) (1466); **voyons d'—,** let us try to stop (*see note* 531).

arriver, to arrive.

Arsinoé, *f.*, *portrait of, by Célimène* (854–872, 914–965, 975–984, 991–1000); *by Acaste* (853–854).

art, *m.*, skill, art, gift.

artifice, *m.*, fraud, snare (170); trick, artifice, strategy, trickery (1497).

aspirer, to hope, be eager (1472).

assaisonnement, *m.*, spice, relish, seasoning (1690, 36).
assassiner, *used figuratively*, to destroy, undo, annihilate, strike dead (1228, 1311).
s'assembler, to gather, heap up, collect (449).
s'asseoir, to sit down (878).
asservir, to enthrall, hold in servitude (1114).
assez, sufficiently (199, 310); quite (584, 613, 633); in large degree (1080); **assez de,** enough, sufficient, a great deal (198, 631).
assidu, persistent, obstinate, assiduous (844); ceaseless, constant, faithful (1257).
assiduité, *f.*, attention, constant presence (472).
assistance, *f.*, aid, help.
assommer, to bore to death, depress (353, 590).
assoupir, to hush up, stifle, nip in the bud, quash (757).
assujettir, to subject; expose (961).
assurance, *f.*, declaration, statement, assurance (1397).
assurément, certainly.
assurer, to certify, declare, assure (507); **s'— à,** to trust, believe, rely upon, be certain of (1407).
astre, *m.*, star, fate, destiny, presentiment; *see note* 1294.
atrabilaire, splenetic.
attachement, *m.*, fondness, attachment (518).
attacher, to bind, strengthen, fix, attach (472); join, engage (740); **— du crime à** (863), to attribute sin to, to consider criminal; **s'—,** to be fixed (1619).
attaquer, to attack, overcome; **— son silence,** to try to begin a conversation (609).
atteindre, to strike, smite, touch; **bien atteint,** deeply in love (240).
attendant, until, waiting for.
attendre, to await; wait (1030); expect (264); stay with, keep company with (1585); **s'— à,** to expect, look for, be prepared for (962).
attente, *f.*, waiting, expectancy; hoping (327).
attirer, to attract (468).
attrait, *m.*, charm, attraction; *plural*, beauty (697).
attribuer, to attribute, assign (911).
au moins, at least.
aucun, any; no (741); **ne . . . aucun, aucun . . . ne,** no (36, 62, 188), none (653).
aucunement (*obsolescent in seventeenth century*), in any respect (1610).
audace, *f.*, boldness, daring, brazenness (1330).
au-dessous de, below, beneath (267).
au-dessus de, above, superior to (644); up-stage, behind other people.
au devant de, toward.
aujourd'hui, *m.*, today, this day (563); nowadays (1069); **au siècle d'—** (1167), nowadays.
auprès de, near, close to; in

the opinion of (108); with (290, 802); compared with (1399).

aussi, also, likewise, thus; therefore (1301); *for modern* **non plus,** either (991, 1093); **d'— méchants,** as bad (429); **— . . . que,** as . . . as (616).

aussitôt que, as soon as, the moment that (680).

austère, severe, stern, austere, uncompromising.

autant, as much; the like (27); the same (52); **— que** (166), as much as, (1031); as long as; **tout —** (508), exactly the same.

auteur, *m.*, writer, author.

autour de, about, around (472).

autre, other, another; **— part** (432, 1413), somewhere else, elsewhere; **d'—s** (421), other people, others; **d'— part** (355), otherwise, on the other hand.

autrement, otherwise (451); better (1448).

autrui, *m.*, another person (673); others (1568).

avance, *f.*, advance (822).

avant, before (*in time*); **— que** + *infinitive* (282); **— que de** + *infinitive* (952, 1769), before; *see note* 282; **en — (de),** in front (of).

avantage, *m.*, gain, privilege, preference, advantage (49).

avec, with; in spite of (229).

avecque, *poetic, alternative form of* **avec** *used before consonants when verse requires an extra syllable,* with (292).

aventure, *f.*, happening, accident; disaster (1222).

aversion, *f.*, hatred, aversion, dislike.

avertir, to warn, give notice, inform (735, 920).

aveu, *m.* (*plural* **aveux**), confession, avowal, (506, 832, 1305).

aveugle, blind (860).

aveuglement, *m.*, blindness, infatuation (968).

s'aveugler, to be blinded, deceived (826, 1009).

avide, grasping, greedy, avaricious (371).

avis, *m.*, counsel, warning, advice, hint (570, 875, 883); opinion (676).

s'aviser de, to think of (852).

avoir, to have, possess; secure possession of (170); **— raison; — tort,** to be right, wrong (192); **— soin** to take pains (700); **— envie** (898), to desire; **qu'avez-vous** (1), **qu'as-tu** (1437), what is the matter with you? (*see note* 1219); **— beau** + *some action,* to do that action in vain, to no purpose (231, 1265, 1483, 1719; *see note* 231); **— de quoi** (506), ought to.

avouer, to confess, admit (436).

B

bagage, *m.*, baggage; **plier —** (1446), to pack up and be off.

bâiller, to yawn (615).

baiser, *m.*, kiss (655).

baisser, to fall.

balance, *f.*, balance, scales (821); **lâcher la** — (1665), to cease wavering, to decide, *literally* to let loose the scales (*cf. note* 1665).

balancer, to hesitate, waver (1590).

banc, *m.*, bench, seat; **les —s du théâtre,** the seats *on* the stage (*see note* 794).

bannir, to dismiss, exile, banish (703).

se **barbouiller,** to daub oneself like a clown, behave strangely so as to compromise one's reputation (*see note* 571).

bas, basse, low, inferior (646); base (1226); unworthy, slight (1793); in a low tone, aside, a stage-whisper (319*d*, 591); **de haut en bas** haughtily, superciliously (1020).

basque, *f.*, skirt (746); *see* **grand'basque.**

bassesse, *f.*, baseness (1394).

bâton, *m.*, stick, cudgel, club (464).

battant, *m.*, half of a double-door; **porte à deux —s** (*in stage-set*).

battre, to beat, whip; **— ses gens** (*see note* 940).

beau, bel, belle; beaux, belles, beautiful, pretty, happy, fair; delightful (295); excellent, sterling, noble (355); **bel esprit,** *m.*, wit; **beaux yeux,** beauty (*see note* 1015); **beau temps,** pleasant weather (611); **le beau monde,** the world of fashion, society (481); **beau,** *m.*, **belle,** *f.*, handsome man, beautiful woman; **avoir beau** (*see under* **avoir** *and note* 231).

beaucoup, much, many; deeply; far (390).

beauté, *f.*, beauty; **la — du fait** (202), the sake of having a splendid example, the beauty of the thing (fact); beautiful woman (810).

bel, *see* **beau.**

Bélise, *f., sketch of, by Célimène* (604–616).

belle, *f.*, beauty, belle (808).

bénéfice, *m.*, ecclesiastic position, living (621).

bénir, to bless, thank (516).

bercer, to lull, soothe, put to sleep (316, 379).

besoin, *m.*, need, necessity (363); **au** — (955), if need be, when necessary, in case of need.

biais, *m.*, expedient, evasion, deception, subterfuge, trick; (*monosyllabic in* 1351, *but elsewhere in Molière often dissyllabic*).

bien, well; **eh** — (439), well! **fort** — (374), very well, on the best of terms (823) (*cf. note* 603); well enough (490); correctly (939); very, quite, indeed, certainly (568); deeply (240); thoroughly (710); uprightly, blamelessly (908); in good part (910); too (1525); virtuously (923); in favor (802); rather (748); clearly (441, 1023); **— plutôt** (1287),

far rather; — **mieux** (402), far better, far more; **prendre — le milieu** (912*d*), to take the very centre of the stage; *sometimes merely emphatic and almost untranslatable:* **nous verrons** — (309), **je voudrais** — (427). *As adverb of quantity:* much, many; — **des endroits** (73) many occasions; **encore en est-il** — (117), still there are many.

bien, *m.*, good (*in the abstract*) (1573); good deed, kindness, service (1704); **du dernier** — (603), on the best of terms; *plural:* property, goods, wealth (170, 783, 1428).

bienséance, *m.*, good breeding, good manners; **de la** — (77), in good taste, proper, decorous, decent.

bientôt, soon (612).

bienveillance, *f.*, good will, favor, friendliness, protection.

bienvenu, welcome.

bile, *f.*, anger, gall, indignation (449).

billet, *m.*, note, letter (1328); — **tendre** (1686), tender missive, love letter.

bizarre, peculiar, strange (1137).

bizarrerie, *f.*, fantastic quality (2); absurd caprice, whim, oddness.

blâmable, worthy of blame, blamable (713).

blâmer, to condemn, blame (231).

blanc, *m.*, white chalk *or* paint; **mettre du** — (942), to paint the face (*see note* 83).

blancheur, *f.*, whiteness, blondness, fairness (717).

blesser, to offend, wound, hurt, injure; — **au cœur** (964), to cut to the quick, the heart.

blessure, *f.*, wound, injury.

blond, fair, blond (*see note* 482).

bois, *m.*, wood (616); dangerous place, ambuscade, robbers' nest (*see note* 1522).

bon, bonne, good, happy; well (297); **trouver bon** (419), to permit, admit, allow; **tout de bon** (102, 203), really and truly, seriously; **bons mots** (636), witty, clever words; *for modern* **meilleur** *in* 846 **du bon de mon cœur** (*cf.* 1214), with all my heart, from the depths of my heart; **bon** *is ironical in* 651; **bon air** (797), good appearance, presence; **à quoi bon** (937), of what use; well (*see note* 76); **bon caractère** (*see note* 585).

bonheur, *m.*, happiness (503); good fortune (1713); good luck (516).

bonjour, *m.*, good day; how do you do? (594).

bonté, *f.*, goodness, favor, kindness (1039).

bouche, *f.*, mouth, lips (680).

bourru, crabbed, grumpy, morose, surly, crotchety (1690, 24). Furetière defines thus: *Qui ne veut point voir le monde, qui a des manies extravagantes.*

bout, *m.*, end, extremity, limit,

extreme (328, 1375); **mettre à** — (1323), to convict, confound utterly, silence; **en venir à** — (856), to succeed, accomplish; **pousser à** — (328, 1375, 1754), to push, carry, goad, drive to the (bitter) end.

brailleur, *m.*, loud talker, bawler, brawler, noisy person (*see note* 548).

bras, *m.*, arm; **sur les** — (440, 1576), on one's hands.

braver, to defy, outbrave (1336); **se** — (755), defy scornfully, affront.

bravoure, *f.*, bravery, valor.

bride, *f.*, rein, check-rein, curb; **tenir la** —, to check (*see note* 347).

brigue, *f.*, intrigue, competition (139).

brillant, brilliant (1055); — **commerce** (597), brilliant, most aristocratic, society (*see* **commerce**).

brillant, *m.* (*usually in plural and figurative*) diamond, jewel, trinket; **faux** —**s** (416), paste diamonds; **petits** —**s** (1018), vain show, paltry splendor, petty lustre, silly glamor (*see note* 1018).

briller, to gleam, shine (1497); "to be glaringly obvious" (Spencer).

briser, to break off, interrupt, stop, cease (731, 1027).

se brouiller, to quarrel, make enemies (548); **brouillé** (210), at variance, at loggerheads, embroiled, on ill terms.

bruit, *m.*, rumor, report; noise (582); **méchants** —**s** (171), slander.

brûler, to burn, be consumed with love, long, languish (810); to be eager (258, 1732) (*requires verb of subordinate clause to be subjunctive.*)

brun, dark-skinned; **brune,** *f.* (718), brunnette.

brusque, sudden, gruff, blunt, violent, rough.

brusquement, quickly.

brusquerie, *f.*, sudden fit, blunt way *or* speech, surliness, bluntness (1690, 23).

bruyant, noisy.

C

c', *see* **ce** (2).

çà, Oh çà (839), look here, listen to me.

cabale, *f.*, intrigue, trickery, plotting, conspiracy (194, 1556).

cabinet, *m.*, desk, compartment in a desk, pigeon-hole (*see note* 376).

cacher, to hide, conceal; **se** —, to hide oneself; **m'en** —, to hide from them, overlook, deny them (*see note* 699).

calmer, to quiet, calm.

calomnie, *f.*, slander, calumny (1682).

canapé, *m.*, sofa.

candeur, *f.*, frankness, honesty, candor.

canons, *m. pl.*, knee-cuffs; knee-ruffles (*see note* 483).

capable, capable.

cape, *f.*, cloak, cape; **n'avoir**

que la — et l'épée, to be poverty-stricken (*see note* 1690, 19).

caprice, *m.*, whim, caprice, fancy (1649).

car, because, for.

caractère, *m.*, figure, type, taste, style; moral character (1691); **sort du bon —** (386), is not in good taste, abandons good taste (*see note* 386); **un bon —,** an eccentric type, a funny fellow (*see note* 585).

caresse, *f.*, mark of affection, endearment, caress (*see note* 17–20).

caresser, to show affection (*by word or action*) (49).

carnage, *m.*, carrion, flesh, slaughter; **affamé de —** (177), blood-thirsty.

carrosse, *m.*, coach, carriage (848, 1030).

cas, *m.*, matter, affair, case; **un si grand —** (988), so important a matter; **— pendable** (*law term*) (29), hanging matter; **faire — de** (421, 631, 787), to value highly, esteem, appreciate; **faire un — particulier** (1164), **faire un — extrême** (1066, 1787), to esteem most highly.

casser, to break, smash (335), (1447); to annul, quash, reverse a court decision (1542). *The highest court in France is called* « *La Cour de Cassation.* »

cause, *f.*, reason (1444); case, lawsuit (189).

causer, to cause, occasion (239).

caution, *f.*, guarantee, surety, security, guarantor (896).

(*1*) **ce, cet** (214), **cette;** *pl.* **ces,** this, that, these, those; **ces** (1518, 1631), such.

(*2*) **ce** (*or* **c'**) *plus some form of* **être** *followed by* **que** *later in the sentence* (*see* **être** *and note* 58); **c'est,** it is, there is; **sont-ce** (223), are they? **ce ne sont point** (307), they are not. (*See* **c'est . . . que.**)

ce qui (*subject*), **ce que** (*object*), what; *meaning a person* (Célimène), her, (208, 212, 1196) (*see note* 208); **ce que,** *followed later by* **de,** *is an expression denoting quantity* (270, 862, 867, 963, 987, 1337) (*see note* 270), that which, what.

ceci, this (1684).

céder, to yield, surrender, abandon oneself (1313).

cela, that; such matters (300, 380).

céler, to hide, conceal (517).

Célimène, *f.*, *portrait of, by Alceste* (225–234, 465–474); *by Philinte* (205–224); *by Eliante* (1180–1184); *by Arsinoé* (878–912), (1001–1024) *and much more of Act III, Scene v.*

celui, celle; ceux, celles, he, him, she, her; they; them; that, those.

censeur, *m.*, critic, censor; faultfinder (690).

censure, *f.*, judgment, censure, blame, carping, faultfinding (933).

cent, *m.*, (a) hundred.

cependant, yet, nevertheless; and yet (137); meanwhile (288, 613).

cérémonie, *f.*, courtesy, politeness, deference, attention, ceremoniousness.

certain, sure (1235); absolute, convincing (841, 1606); certain (756).

certainement, surely, assuredly, certainly (1285).

certes, certainly (509, 985).

cervelle, *f.*, brains (*in* 1098 brainlessness), folly, extravagance, idiocy, "shallow wit" (Eggert).

cesse, *f.*, ceasing, cessation; **sans —** (591), always, unceasingly, incessantly.

c'est . . . que (*see note* 58; *other cases* 279–280, 556, 582, 629, 641, 1235–1236, 1268, 1400).

chacun, *m.*, **chacune,** *f.*, each one, every one.

chagrin, *adj.*, grieved, sorrowful, dissatisfied (782).

chagrin, *m.* (*see note* 6); *occurs with great frequency in Le Misanthrope* (6, 91, 97, 685, 688, 993, 1186, 1521, 1584, 1690, 23). *In every case the word is used either by Alceste or in reference to him. The word is not easy to define. Among editors there is much diversity:* « humeur noire » (Livet); « aigreur, colère, dépit » (Lanson-Mornet); ill-humor (Giese); "heftiger Aerger" (Geist); *obviously Alceste gives it a more favorable meaning than his critics. Other suggestions are:* bitterness, anger, vexation, mortification, sulkiness, discontent, peevishness, spleen, irritability, surliness, disappointment, churlishness. *It does not apparently connote melancholy, sadness, or chagrin.*

chaîne, *f.*, chain, bond, fetter (1378).

chaise, *f.*, chair; Sedan chair (*carried by porters*) (*see note* 578).

chaleur, *f.*, warmth, affection; ardent desire, feverish longing, eagerness (349).

chambre, *f.*, room, bed-room; **valet de —** (1074), private servant.

champ, *m.*, field.

chance, *f.*, good luck.

changer, to change, alter; **— de ton,** to change one's tone of voice; **se —** (103), to be changed.

chanson, *f.*, song, ditty.

chapitre, *m.*, topic, subject (1099).

chaque, every, each (620).

charge, *f.*, permanent position (621, 1076); employment, post, place.

charger, to load, overload, increase, burden; **se —,** to load oneself.

charitable, kindly, charitable (570).

charité, *f.*, kindness, charity (1117).

charmant, delightful (1044).

charme, *m.*, magic power, fascination, attraction, charm (470, 1047).

charmer, to enchant, please, delight, charm (*see note* 212).

chasser, to put to flight, chase away (474).

châtier, to punish, condemn, chastise.

châtiment, *m.*, punishment, chastisement (1307).

chaud, warm (259); *m.*, heat, warm weather (611).

chef, *m.*, leader; authoritative critic (795).

chemin, *m.*, road, way; **faire un** — (1080), to open a road; **coupons — à**, to cut short, cease (*see note* 530).

cher, chère, dear, valuable, expensive; **peu** — (55), of no value; **mon** — (826), my dear fellow.

chercher, to seek (1722); try to discover (1292); find (606).

chérir, to cherish, dote on, worship (1715).

cheval, *m. pl.*, **chevaux,** horse (600); **adresse à** — (1150) horsemanship.

chez, to, with, from, in, at; — **lui** (212), from it (mankind); — **eux** (1520), among them (men); — **elle** (862), in her, about her; — **lui** (1167), in him; — **moi** (432), in (from) (with) me; to my home (456, 1128); — **vous** (536), at home (to visitors); — **qui** (623), to whose house; — **vous** (480), with you; — **lui** (602) with him; **fixer — elles** (— **vous**) (1012, 1713), to attach (attract) to themselves (to you). *The wide use of* **chez** *in the seventeenth century is seen in the above diversity of examples; it has some of the functions of* **en, auprès de,** *etc.*

chien, *m.*, dog (600).

chimère, *f.*, idle fancy, phantom, imagination, chimera (1233).

choisir, to choose (566).

choix, *m.*, choice, discrimination (281).

chose, *f.*, matter, thing; effort (1807); difficulty, trouble, quarrel (1576); **grand'chose** (201), a great deal (*see note* 201).

chut (*sound the* **t**), hush, silence (847).

chute, *f.*, fall; *the technical expression for the last line of certain kinds of poetry, the "dying fall" of Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" (I. i.)*, ending, conclusion (*see note* 331–335).

ciel, *m.*, *plural* **cieux,** heaven (271); *same meaning in plural* (672).

cinquième, fifth.

citer, to quote, cite, refer to (598).

civil, polite, civil; **dehors —s** (66), outward civilities.

civilité, *f.*, politeness (1688); courtesy, friendliness.

clair, evident, clear.

clarté, *f.*, certainty; **avec —** (1124), clearly, with proof.

Cléon, *m.*, *sketch of, by Clitandre, Célimène and Eliante* (623–630).

Cléonte, *m.*, *sketch of, by Cli-*

tandre and Célimène (567–574).

Clitandre, *m., portrait of, by Alceste* (475–488); *by Célimène* (489–492, 1690, 39–46).

cœur, *m.*, heart; **à — ouvert** (273, 531), in all sincerity, with open heart; **de bon —** (1159), right heartily; courage ("sense of honor," Boully) (787, 1147); lover (707).

cohue, *f.*, crowd, swarm, mob (474).

coin, *m.*, corner (*see note* 1584).

colère, *f.*, anger, wrath (1313).

colifichet, *m.*, trinket, bauble, trumpery (*see note* 403).

combat, *m.*, struggle, combat; **faire —** (47), to rival, strive to outdo, vie with (*see note* 47).

combattre, to fight, resist, combat (679); clash with (947).

combien, how, how much.

comédie, *f.*, comedy, cause for laughter (106).

Comédie Française, *f., the famous national theatre in Paris, often called « la maison de Molière. »*

commandement, *m.*, order, commission, command (751, 769 (*see note* 769–772).

comme, as, like, since; as well as (818); *for modern* **comment,** how, what (22, 359, 1005, 1462).

commencer, to begin, start, inaugurate, commence (295).

comment? how? what's that? (755).

commerce, *m.*, trade, exchange, traffic, interchange (68); intercourse, society (1486); **le brillant —** (*see* **brillant**) (597), society of highest birth and distinction, "the upper ten" (Giese); 'the four hundred.'

commettre, to entrust, commit, appoint (956).

commun, current, usual (154); ordinary, everyday, common; mutual (822); **lieux —s** (610), commonplaces of conversation; **un homme du —** (675), a man of the common herd, "a vulgar-minded man."

compagnie, *f.*, society, company (1034); **faire —,** accompany (1681).

comparable à, like, comparable to (717).

comparaison, *f.*, comparison.

compatible, congenial, consistent (1084).

compatir à, to pity, sympathize with (1259).

complaisance, *f.*, complacency, kindness (321); readiness to oblige, toleration, affability, favor (473); **molle —** (705), obsequious compliance; weakness, yielding (758).

complaisant, approving, flattering (659); *m.*, sycophant, fawner, flatterer (326).

complexion, *f.*, temperament, character, disposition (283).

compliment, *m.*, civility, felicitation, compliment.

composer, to write, scribble (366); compose (428).

comprendre, to understand; **lui faire** — (373), to make him understand.

compte, *m.*, calculation, reckoning, judgment; **à votre** — (13), according to your opinion.

compter, to count, consider (715).

concerté, in previous agreement (1654); preconcerted.

concevoir, to imagine, conceive (254, 1220, 1232); **se** — (523), to be conceived, understood, imagined.

conclure, to settle, bring about, conclude (1134); — **affaire** (*see note* 1708), settle matters.

conclusion, *f.*, end, conclusion (948).

condamnable, criminal, condemnable (1502).

condamner, to blame, criticize, condemn; sentence (761, 1154).

conduite, *f.*, manner of living, conduct (887).

confesser, to admit, own, confess, acknowledge.

confirmer, to prove, confirm, convince of (272).

confondre, to confuse (1070); convict (1325); reveal, unmask, expose (129).

conforme, suited to your character (246), suitable, congruous.

confus, confused, ashamed (1333); discomfited, overwhelmed with confusion (1739).

congé, *m.*, leave (1029).

conjecture, *f.*, belief, conjecture (829).

connaissance, *f.*, knowledge (1470).

connaître, to know intimately; *for modern* **reconnaître** (1324, 1791), recognize, realize; **se** — (282), to know each other.

conquête, *f.*, victory, conquest (805, 1021).

conscience, *f.*, conscience (1107).

consentir, admit (1341); agree, grant, consent.

conséquence, *f.*, inference, conclusion (1013).

conserver, to retain, keep (1412); remain on good terms with (1641).

considérable, eminent (270); worthy, esteemed, exalted.

considération, *f.*, respect, deference, consideration.

considérer, to show consideration for, esteem (1410).

consoler, to comfort, console (1698).

consommé, perfect, complete, consummate (853).

constamment, with fortitude, with constancy (810).

constance, *f.*, repose, firmness, patience (1218); courage, constancy, equanimity, bravery (493) (*see note* 1218).

constant, evident (1535), certain; true, faithful, constant, unchangeable (1250).

consulter, to ask advice, consult (1660).

conte, *m.*, tale (902).

content, glad (876); satisfied

(514, 1773); contented, happy, contained, fixed.

contentement, *m.*, happiness (1801).

se **contenter,** to be satisfied (311).

conter, to tell, narrate, recount.

conteur, *m.*, big talker, boaster, story-teller (595).

continuer, to keep on, continue, carry on (970).

contorsion, *f.*, grimace, contortion (*of the body or face*), 'bowing and scraping' (43).

contraindre, to force, constrain (899).

contrainte, *f.*, restraint, coercion.

contraire, *m.*, opposite, contrary (453); adverse (1198); **au —,** on the contrary (965).

contrariant, contradictory, contradicting; **esprit —** (672), spirit of contradiction.

contre, against; for (1690, 44).

contredire, to gainsay, contradict.

convaincant, unanswerable, ocular, convincing (1336).

convaincre, to convince (1348).

convenir de, to agree to, acquiesce in, admit (136).

conversation, *f.*, talk, conversation (584) (*see note* 645–646).

coquet, –te, coquettish, flirtatious (219).

correction, *f.*, censure, reproof, correction (954).

corriger, to reform, correct, mend; restrain (1019).

corrompu, sinful, corrupted, corrupt.

côté, *m.*, side; direction; **de mon —** (1203), for my part; **de ce —** (1537), on that score; **d'autre —** (1395), another way; **de tous —s** (1135), on all sides, in all directions, this way and that.

couché, *m.*, *for modern* **coucher; petit —** (739), late evening audience of the king (*cf.* **levé** *and note* 567).

coup, *m.*, stroke, blow; **encore un —** (1243), once more; **à tous —s** (608), every instant; **— d'œil** (587), glance.

coupable, guilty, reprehensible, culpable.

couper, to cut; **— chemin à** (*see* **chemin** *and note* 530).

coup-gorge, *m.*, ambush of cutthroats, den of murderers (1522).

couplet, *m.*, verses, couplet.

cour, *f.*, the royal court; the nobility; **amis de —** (651), court friends, i.e. insincere, false friends; **faire la —** (1008), to pay court (*see notes* 165, 1081–1098).

courir, to run, hurry, hasten; circulate (1501).

couronne, *f.*, crown (725).

couronner, to reward, crown (1199).

courroux, *m.* (*poetic for* **colère**), anger, wrath (107); **être en —** (1051), to be angry.

cours, *m.*, way, course.

cousin, –e, *m.*, *f.*, cousin.

coûter, to cost.

couvrir, to cover; hide, conceal, veil, excuse, cloak (1759); to put on one's hat.

cracher, to expectorate, spit (1690, 12).
craindre, to fear.
crainte, *f.*, fear (1618).
créance, *f.*, belief, idea (*see note* 1726).
crédit, *m.*, trust, credit; **à —** (816), on credit, i.e. *with small chance of repayment;* effect, result, influence, reputation, power (1528, 1533).
cri, *m.*, outcry (929).
crime, *m.*, crime, sin (1385, 1742); **attacher du — à** (863), to attribute sin to. (*See note* 1385.)
croire, to believe; **croyez-moi** (367), take my advice; **se —** (622), to esteem himself.
croisé, crossed (647).
cruel, –le, pitiless, cruel (1095).
cuisant, burning, galling, cruel, intense; **— ennui** (1248), burning, intense sorrow.
cuisine, *f.*, kitchen (1450).
cuisinier, *m.*, cook.

D

d', *see* **de.**
daigner, to condescend, deign (646).
d'ailleurs, *see* **ailleurs.**
dame, *f.*, lady.
Damis, *m., portrait of, by Célimène and Philinte* (630–648).
damner, to punish, condemn (*see note* 649).
Damon, *m., portrait of, by Acaste and Célimène* (575–582).
dans, in, inside, into; *for modern* **à,** at (370, 544, 1672); *for modern* **avec,** with (147); **donner —** (59, 220), to yield to, be addicted to.
danse, *f.*, dancing, dance (1150).
davantage, more (213, 424).
de, of, from; with (21, 216, 253, 655, 764, 967, 1171, 1216, 1683); by means of (1494); by (236, 271, 1609); for (28, 117, 269, 501, 516, 738); about (145, 168, 928, 972, 1453); at (98); to (1587) (*and generally before infinitives*); in (33, 47, 62, 77, 293, 427, 967, 1055, 1351); as (24, 510); on (1249); between (620); one of (256, 632); **de** *with infinitive often equivalent to a* **si** *clause* (1064, 1272); *often untranslatable, especially when forming the partitive article* (53, 54, 72, 102, 307, 308, *etc.*)
dé, *m.*, dice; **à vous le —** (1690, 21), your turn (at the dice) now.
débat, *m.*, discussion, difference of opinion, debate (776).
débiter, to hand out, retail, say, repeat, (589).
début, *m.*, start, beginning (583).
déchaînement, *m.*, unchaining, unloosening, disruption, upheaval (1221).
déchaîner, to let loose, rage (*see note* 992).
déchirer, to tear to pieces (1699).
décider, to settle, decide (298, 795).

déclarer, to tell openly, declare, avow (351); **déclaré,** avowed (858).
découvrir, to find, discover (268); disclose (1101).
décrier, to bring into disrepute, discredit, condemn (354).
dédire, se —, to unsay, retract (512, 763, 768).
déesse, *f.*, goddess (723).
défaite, *f.*, evasion, pretence, sham, pretext (1009).
défaut, *m.*, defect, fault, failure.
défendre, to save, defend, clear (894); forbid (1658).
défense, *f.*, defence (945).
défier, to challenge, defy (522).
dégager, to free (1784).
degré, *m.*, rank; degree (872).
déguiser, to hide, conceal (303).
dehors, *adv.*, outside, outdoors, on the street (464); **en —,** outside, i.e. off-stage; *m.*, outward appearance; **— civils** (66), formalities of courtesy, outward politenesses; **sage —** (938), outward good behavior, exterior virtue.
déjà, already 319.
délicat, difficult, delicate (341); dainty, choice.
délivrer, to free, relieve, rid (844).
déloger, to decamp (*see note* 1442).
déloyauté, *f.*, perfidy, disloyalty, (1282).
demande, *f.*, request, demand (1604).
demander, to ask, require, request, demand; **— place** (274), ask a place; **— l'heure** (615), ask the time of day.
démangeaison, *f.*, itching, longing, craving (346).
démêlé, *m.*, difference, quarrel, bickering (530).
démêler, to unravel, solve, disentangle (1476); to have to do (1455).
démentir, to belie, give the lie to, prove false, contradict (1178); refuse to believe (1679); disavow, discredit.
demeurer, to remain, stay; spend (313); become (1333); **— d'accord** (**de**) (190, 899), to admit, agree.
démon, *m.*, devil, demon (1283).
démordre, *literally*, *'to loose one's bite'*; to yield, abate, desist, retract (765).
dent, *f.*, tooth (798).
départ, *m.*, departure, leaving, going (734).
dépendance, *f.*, compulsion; **sans —** (1298), spontaneously, freely.
dépense, *f.*, cost, expense, expenditure, trouble (323); sumptuous manner of living, lavishness (1149).
dépit, *m.*, spite (869); slight, sting, affront, insult, ignominy (*see note* 1296); **en — qu'on en ait** (*see note* 232).
déplaire, to be unpleasant, displease, offend; **n'en déplaise à** (*see notes* 75, 577); **sans vous —** (1669), with your permission, if you please.

déployer, to open, unfold.
déportement, *m.*, conduct; *in* 903 *the connotation is* bad conduct, (*see note* 903).
depuis, since; — **longtemps** (255), for a long time past, long since, long ago; — **peu** (296), a short time ago; — **que** (637), ever since.
derni–er, –ère, last; extreme, utmost, greatest (18, 1503); **du dernier bien** (603), on best of terms (*see note* 18).
dérober à, to hide from (368); **se — à,** to escape from (1211).
derrière, behind.
dès, from; — **ce jour** (1596), this very day; — **que,** as soon as, the moment that.
des, *partitive plural article often untranslatable as in* 12, 54, *etc.*
désabuser, to undeceive (1119).
désavouer, to deny, disavow (1331).
descendre, to descend (646); stoop (1394); to move downstage (toward the footlights).
désert, *m.*, solitude, deserted, lonely place (144, 1763, 1770) (*see notes* 144, 1762–1763).
désespérer, to become desperate, despair (331).
désir, *m.*, wish, desire.
désobligeant, unpleasant, disobliging (1631).
désormais, henceforth (1615).
dessein, *m.*, resolution, plan, purpose, determination, resolve; **à — de** (241), for the purpose of.
dessus, on it (747); **au — de** above.
destin, *m.*, fate (1198).
destinée, *f.*, fate, destiny (1417).
se **détacher,** to detach, free, divest, rid oneself of (825); vent itself, break loose, unleash itself (870).
déterrer, discover, ferret out (1064); **se —** (1065), disclose, reveal itself.
détester, to loathe, despise, detest (1779).
détour, *m.*, evasion, subterfuge, prevarication, quibble, shift (1346).
détourner, to move, divert, turn aside (1484).
détromper, se —, to undeceive (oneself) (1729).
détruire, to destroy, dispel (967); **se —,** defeat.
deux, two; a few (732); **tous — (284),** both; **nous —** (99), us two, both of us.
devant, before, in front of; **allant au — de** (748), going to meet.
devenir, to become.
devoir, to owe, ought (775); must, should.
devoir, *m.*, homage, devotion; **—s empressés** (1257), eager homage.
dévot, religious, pious; **lieux —s** (941), places of public worship.
diable, *m.*, devil; **au —** (334, 1473) = *digne d'aller au diable,* belonging to the devil, devil's own, infernal (*see note* 334).

diantre, *m.*, *euphemistic exclamation for* **diable** (364), the devil, the dickens, the deuce (*see note* 25).

Dieu, *m.*, God; — **merci** (818), thank God; **mon** — (101), oh Lord; *rarely to be rendered with literal translation except under tragic or religious conditions; generally softened to* heavens, good gracious *or the like, as in* 145, 542, 876, 1623).

différence, *f.*, distinction, shade, difference.

différend, *m.*, dispute, quarrel, altercation (1137).

difficile, fastidious, hard to please (638, 1158).

digne, worthy,

dire, to say, speak, tell (1294); show, proclaim (1745); repeat, recite (392); **dit** (1646), told, confirmed; **chose dite,** settled thing; **vouloir** — (1279), to signify, mean.

dire *in* **trouver à** —, to find wanting, to miss (*see note* 1690, 34).

se **diriger,** to start.

discord, *m.*, *for modern* **discorde,** *f.*, *was already archaic in Molière's time;* dispute, quarrel, disagreement (*see note* 1680).

discours, *m.*, conversation, talk, speech, words, discourse (886); *plural same meaning.*

diseur, *m.*, speaker, prater (46).

disgrâce, *f.*, misfortune, humiliation (1238); downfall; *often in plural* (981), ravage of time, disappointments, disillusions, neglects.

dispenser, to release, free, excuse (299); **se** — (420), to decline, refuse, be exempt.

se **disposer,** to get ready (759).

dispute, *f.*, discussion, parley; **sans** — (1577), without further argument, quietly.

disputer, to contest, dispute; to be contested (139).

se **dissiper,** to disappear, vanish, be scattered (1267).

distinguer, to differentiate, discriminate, single out, distinguish (63).

distraire, to turn aside, divert, save from (330).

dit, said, settled; proven (1646); **une chose** —**e** (185), a settled thing.

divers, varied, various, diverse (1789).

se **divertir,** to jest (*but more delicate than* **se moquer**) (1213); be merry, be amused (1690, 33).

docile, tractable, gentle, kindly, pliant (1565).

doigt, *m.*, finger (479).

domestique, *m.*, servant.

don, *m.*, gift, faculty (1089).

donc, then; else (338).

donner, to give, bestow, assign; cause, inspire (122, 227); — **dans** (59, 220), to give in to, yield to, be addicted to, agree with, indulge in (*see note* 59); — **prise** (904), to give occasion; — **la comédie,** to excite laughter (*see note* 106); — **au bruit** (1535–1536), to pay atten-

tion to, give belief to; — **la main** (1128), to escort; — **les mains** (1761), to consent, aid (*see note* 1388).

donneur, *m.*, giver, dispenser, dealer.

dont, whose, of whom, of which, for which; at which (173, 403), *often for* **ce dont, chose dont** (634); — **je me sens** (1082), which I feel I have.

d'or, *m., peasant dialect for* **or,** gold (*see note* 747).

doré, gilded.

Dorilas, *m., portrait of, by Philinte* (84–86).

dos, *m.*, back.

dossier, *m.*, back (*of a chair*).

d'où, whence (221).

double, false, deceitful, perfidious, tricky (1322).

doucement, quietly, calmly, gently (163); politely (1460).

doucereu–x, –se, sweetish, honeyed; **faire le** — (*see note* 1690, 40).

douceur, *f.*, gentleness, kindliness, forbearance (*see note* 148); tenderness, affectionate words (708, 1115, 1285, 1337); sweetness, amiability (469).

douer, to endow (1071).

doute, *m.*, doubt; **sans** —, certainly unquestionably, of course (*see note* 1416); **faire** —, to have doubt (1453).

douter, to doubt, question (1688); — **de** (1406), to doubt.

dou–x, –ce, gentle, sweet, affectionate (216, 308); endearing (1416); easy (1080); dear (223); delicate (1635).

dresser, to prepare, contrive, set (170).

droit, *m.*, right (1304, 1548); **en être en** — (1737), to have the right.

droite, *f.*, right hand, right.

droiture, *f.*, integrity, righteousness, uprightness (207).

duc, *m.*, duke (598).

dupe, *f.*, dupe; *equivalent to an adjective* duped, foolish, stupid (1010, 1703).

durant, *follows its noun*, during, for; **trois quarts d'heure** — (1690, 12), a full three-quarters of an hour.

dureté, *f.*, hardness of heart.

E

éblouir, to dazzle, blind; **t'** — **les yeux** (779), blind yourself, flatter yourself.

écarter, to separate, scatter; **écarté** (1805), secluded, lonely.

échauffer, to heat, excite, provoke, rouse; **s'**— (168), to become excited, riled; **m'**— **la bile** (90), to stir my wrath, exasperate me.

éclaircir, to enlighten, inform, instruct (1472); clear up (1670).

éclaircissement, *m.*, explanation (1599).

éclat, *m.*, brilliancy, prestige, lustre, glamour, ostentation; **grands** —**s** (887), actions that cause gossip, noisy show, "scandalous ostenta-

tion" (Spencer); scandal (1531, 1767); **—s de zèle** (925), display of piety and austerity (*see notes* 887, 890, 925); public announcement, publicity (1639); **faire — de** (348), to make public, blaze abroad.

éclatant, brilliant, shining, startling, dazzling; conspicuous, superior (482, 1209); striking (1429).

éclater, to burst out, explode, rail, inveigh (183); to show itself noisily (527); to reveal itself, shine (702); **faire —** (671), to reveal forcefully, display energetically.

école, *f.*, school.

écouter, to listen to, pay attention to, hear (291).

écraser, to crush, destroy (271).

écrire, to write (346, 1037).

écrit, *m.*, writing; piece of writing, composition (353); letter (1766).

effaré, scared, frightened (1436).

effarouché, frightened; suspicious (497).

effet, *m.*, fact; **en —** (525, 1107), in reality, truly.

s'efforcer, to strive, make an effort, endeavor (1026, 1389).

effort, *m.*, pains, effort (463); struggle (519).

effrayer, to frighten, terrify (1774).

effronterie, *f.*, impudence, shamelessness, effrontery (198).

effroyable, dreadful, fearful, intense.

également, likewise; equally (1071).

égard, *m.*, deference, consideration.

égaré, lost, stray; bewildered, distracted, absent-minded (587).

égayer, to cheer, please, make happy (778).

égorger, to slay (*by cutting the throat*); annihilate (1495).

eh bien! well! (439).

élever, to raise; **s'—,** to rise.

elle, she, her, it.

éloge, *m.*, praise, encomium.

embarras, *m.*, confusion, confused affair, complication; mess (1476).

embarrasser, to be at a loss, embarrassed (1796); **s'—,** to be bothered (1062).

embrassade, *f.*, hug, embrace; *sarcastic or ironic in* 45 *and* 1161 *as compared with its synonym* **embrassement.**

embrassement, *m.*, embrace, kiss (*see note* 17–20).

embrasser, to embrace, kiss on the cheek (37).

Émilie, *f.*, *portrait of, by Philinte* (81–83) (*see note* 81).

émouvoir, to stir, move, disturb (1219, 1373, 1582); *in* 1710 **émouvoir** *is really reflexive with the reflexive pronoun omitted because of* **se sentir.**

empêcher, to prevent, hinder, help (462); *note Molière's freedom in using or not using*

ne *in a subordinate clause after this verb* (999, 1478).

empire, *m.*, domination, tyranny, power, authority (1357); control (345).

emplette, *f.*, errand, purchase; *pl.* shopping (250).

emploi, *m.*, position (621, 786); method, use, means (*see note* 621).

employer, to use; **allons —** (1807), let us use.

empoisonneur, *m.*, poisoner, flatterer (*see note* 334).

emportement, *m.*, passion, anger (1315).

emporter, to carry off; **l'—** (140, 1557) (*see note* 140); **s'—** (989, 1475), to get angry, be carried away, become excited.

empressé, busy, eager (1257).

empressement, *m.*, eagerness, ardor, zeal, over-forwardness; urging (348); hurry (1459).

en, *preposition:* in, on; *with present participles:* **— vous séparant** (23), on separating, when you leave him; into: **tourner — ridicule** (108), to turn into a ridiculous person; to: **mettre — dépense** (373), to put to expense; *for* **à**: **— sa naissance** (757), at its birth; **réduite — un sort** (1426), reduced to a fate (*this use of* **en** for **à** *was common after* **s'intéresser, prendre part, songer,** *etc.*); *for* **dans**: **— des cœurs** (12), in hearts; *for* **avec**: **— pitié** (648), with pity; as; like: **— homme d'honneur** (35); **— chef** (795), as a man of honor, as a leader.

en, *pronoun:* of it; thereat (110); from it (299); *replaces a* **de** *construction:* **— convient** (136), agrees with that; **vous n'— épargnez point** (652), you spare none; about it (190, 750, 1710); for them (231); *may refer to persons* (117, 652, 1164, 1690, 46). *In many cases* **en** *is extremely idiomatic and consequently difficult to translate, having only a vague reference to the preceding thought:* (27, 52, 75, 136, 190, 191, 286, 291, 435, 508, 525, 652, 707, 737, 750, 988, 1183, 1223, 1342, 1343, 1481, 1737).

encens, *m.*, incense, praise, flattery (662, 706, 1097).

encenser, to flatter, burn incense before, pay homage to (432).

enchanter, to enchant, enthrall, bewitch (1320).

encor (*alternative poetic form*), **encore,** still, nevertheless; **encore un coup** (1243), once more; yet (117); even then (955); *an impatient and angry* 'What again' (444).

encre, *f.*, ink (1468).

endroit, *m.*, situation, opportunity, case; circumstance (73); passage (*in a play*) (796); places (houses) (1067); **en tous —s** (870), everywhere.

enfer, *m.*, hell; **diable d'—**

(1454), the very devil himself.

enfin, at last, finally; in short (7, 175); after all (1551).

enflammé, fervid, glowing, ardent (504).

enfler, to swell; **s'—** (1017), to swell up, be puffed up.

engager, to tempt, attract, secure (1004); **s'—** (846), to pledge, bind oneself.

enjouement, *m.*, gaiety, sprightliness (*see note* 1690, 2).

ennui, *m.*, moral suffering, anxiety, vexation (239); sorrow (316); **sans —** (1567), cheerfully, without indignation; **cuisant —** (1248), keen suffering. *This word and its derivatives had much stronger meanings at the beginning, than at the end of the seventeenth century; hence a wide difference in their force.*

ennuyer, to vex, anger, be hateful; to bore, weary (*see note* 555).

ennuyeu–x, –se, wearisome, tedious (595).

enrager, to be furious (95, 634).

ensemble, together; apart, asunder (*see note* 450); *sometimes only emphasizes a plural subject.*

ensevelir, to bury; **m'—** (1770) bury myself.

ensuite *in* 1457 *is popular for* **après**; then, afterwards, later.

entendre, to hear; listen to (5); to understand (374, 1668); **s'—,** to be understood.

entêter, to turn one's head, infatuate, bewitch (599).

entièrement, entirely, wholly, completely (288).

entr'acte, *m.*, intermission between the acts, interlude.

entraîner, to drag, drag away (1690, 35); bear off, gain over, induce (194); win, lead captive, capture (1046); **l'— hors de** (1136), to make him change, to dissuade him.

entre, between (295); among, with; **— eux** (92), with one another, among themselves; **—nous** (971), mutually, confidentially.

entrer, to enter; come in (748); **— dans** (1048), to share in, espouse; **faites-le —,** show him in (*see note* 748).

entretenir, to converse with (1041, 1478); entertain (1036).

entretien, *m.*, conversation (591, 604, 924, 1027, 1044); *plural same meaning* (599); conversational group (545).

envelopper, to include, envelop, involve (116); to hush up, patch up, settle (1162); to portend, mean, hide (1471).

envers, toward (1386); against (1742); *see* **vers.**

envie, *f.*, desire, envy; **avoir —,** to desire (898, 1153); **œil d'—** (857), envious eye.

envier, to be jealous of, envy (1021).

envisager, to perceive, behold, envisage (98).

épancher, to spread, shed, lavish (498).
épargner, to spare (652).
épée, *f.*, sword; **n'avoir que la cape et l'—,** to be poverty-stricken (*see note* 1690, 19).
épouvantable, frightful, fearful (614).
épou-x, -se, *m.*, *f.*, husband, wife.
épris, smitten, enamoured, in love (413, 1380, 1728).
éprouver, to experience, meet with (1198).
épuiser, to exhaust (612).
équipage, *m.*, hunting outfit, hunting (600); costume, outfit, rig out (1436).
équité, *f.*, justice, equity (1489).
erreur, *f.*, mistake, error (825).
esclave, *m.*, *f.*, slave (486); **en faisant votre —** (486), while pretending to be your slave.
espèce, *f.*, kind, sort.
espérance, *f.*, hope, encouragement (306).
espérer, to hope
espoir, *m.*, hope (305).
esprit, *m.*, spirit (672, 764, 1028); wit, intellectual cleverness (634, 791); **— médisant** (219), malicious, slander-loving wit; **bel —** (342), wit, cleverness in speech *or* writing, a wit (*see note* 342); **se jeter dans le bel —** (*see note* 1690, 28); **bel —,** *pl.* **beaux —s** (414), witty man, wit; **le pauvre — de femme** (604), the witless, stupid woman.
essor, *m.*, publication, escape into the world (*literally* soaring *as of a bird*) (*see note* 365).
essuyer, to endure, suffer (*literally*, to wipe off) (556, 576, 808, 1098) (*see note* 556).
estime, *f.*, esteem, consideration, estimation; reputation, good name (801); **hauteur d'—** (931), exaggerated self-esteem.
estimer, to value, prize, honor, esteem (58, 245); respect (1272).
estropier, to cripple.
et, and; **— . . . —,** both . . . and.
étage, *m.*, social station, rank, class (601).
étaler, to make show of, parade, display (941).
état, *m.*, state, government, country (267, 1054); possibility; **hors d'—,** unable (1208); condition, position (1109, 1720).
étendu, extended, spread, promiscuous, inclusive (473).
éternel, -le, everlasting, eternal (327).
étonner, to amaze, astonish; **s'—** (209), to be astonished, amazed.
étrange, peculiar, strange, odd, queer; bizarre, extravagant (579); extraordinary (1415).
être, to be; to stay (1039); **c'est que** (240, 422, 496), the reason is, because; **ce** *plus some form of* **être** *followed later by* **que:** (*see note* 58), *other cases* (279–280, 556, 582, 629, 641, 1072, 1235–1236, 1268, 1400, 1793–1794)

(*occasionally the* **que** *of such constructions is omitted. See cases* 26, 158, 908); — **pour** + *infinitive*, to be suited, fitted, capable (60, 260, 673, 1607, 1781; *see note* 60); **c'est à dire,** that is to say, I mean; — *for* **y avoir** *in poetry* (*see note* 53); **est-ce que** (189), *a question-form in French, ignore in translation;* **qu'est-ce?** what (is it)? (532, 748); **c'est ce qui** (**que**) (497), that is what; — **à** + *infinitive* (851), to be busy, occupied; — **à vous** (293), to be at your service; **soit,** so be it, all right; **n'est pas de** (640), does not become.

étude, *f.*, study, care, concern (792); effort (1641) (*see note* 792).

eux, *m. pl.*, them(selves); **entre** — (92), with one another.

éventail, *m.*, fan (*see remark preceding note* 447–448).

s'éventer, to fan oneself.

exact, precise, punctual (939).

exactitude, *f.*, strictness, exactness, precision, preciseness, insistence (206).

exagéré, exaggerated.

examiner, to test, examine.

exception, *f.*, exemption, exception.

excès, *m.*, depth, excess.

exciter, to cause, give rise to, excite (890).

excuse, *f.*, excuse, evasion (1346).

excuser, to pardon, palliate, excuse (898); defend (895); **s'—,** to be pardoned, excused.

exécrable, abominable, execrable (765).

exécuter, to carry out (1264).

exemplaire, model, exemplary (953).

exemple, *m.*, example (919); instance (1178).

exercer, to practice, use (1562).

exiger, to exact, demand (1639).

expliquer, to reveal, explain, unfold (562, 1608); **s'—** (563, 1448), to explain oneself; **faire — votre âme,** to make you reveal your soul (*see note* 562).

exposer, to reveal; — **au public** (297), to publish; **s'—** (302), to unbosom oneself, confide; to risk, expose oneself (350).

exprès, purposely; specially, expressly (769).

expression, *f.*, expression; talk (607).

extérieur, *m.*, external appearance, demeanor (927).

extravagance, *f.*, absurdity, foolishness (706); ridiculousness (574).

extravagant, silly, foolish, absurd, ridiculous (575); *m.*, fool, eccentric person (1335).

extrême, great, excessive (825); extreme (617).

extrémité, *f.*, extreme.

F

face, *f.*, appearance, aspect; **une méchante —** (901), a

suspicious appearance, an ugly aspect; **en —** (1553), to my face; face to face (1630, 1657).

fâcher, to vex; **fâché,** sorry; **se —,** to become angry, vexed.

fâcheu–x, –se, vexatious, annoying, disagreeable (440); hateful, unkind, peevish (527); mischievous, unpleasant (902); torturing, grievous (1122); boresome, tiresome (1690, 25).

facile, easy, ready, facile; open, indulgent (466).

façon, *f.*, way, manner; making, composition (344); *pl.:* ceremonies, affected politeness (590); formality, punctilio, ado, concealment (Joynes) (1191); **de la —,** of such a kind.

fade, insipid, dull, meaningless.

faible, *m.*, weakness (*see notes* 230, 1415); foible, failing 354; *adj.*, powerless, weak, impotent, scanty (863, 985).

faiblesse, *f.*, weakness (1382).

faire, to do (1780); to make (1762); to cause (762); to do (*replacing a previous verb*) (92, 524); *Furetière declared that* **faire** *was the most widely used verb in the language* (*see notes* 47–48, 92, 787). *It takes the place of many verbs, thus:* to write (296, 1469), give (1414), accomplish (519); bestow upon (1083); go on, act (1369); finish, be through (1473); accustom (711); pay (816); endow (1010). *With many nouns* **faire** *forms idioms whose meaning is best found in these nouns; see such idioms under* **affaire, amant, cas, combat, compagnie, cour, doute, éclat, figure, foi, gloire, grâce, honte, horreur, métier, mine, obstacle, pas, peur, pirouette, place, profession, raison, querelle, retraite, tort, tour, vanité, visite, vœu, vol.** *Similarly with adjectives and nouns* **faire** *has the meaning* to act like, to pretend to be, pose as, to play; *see such cases under* **doucereux** (*see note* 1690, 40), **esclave, joli, vain.** *As a sort of auxiliary,* **faire** *combines with infinitives in the sense of* to make *or* to cause *the action expressed by the infinitive; see such cases under* **accroire, aimer, comprendre, éclater, entrer, expliquer, imprimer, monter, mourir, naître, savoir, sonner, tomber, voir.** *Other idiomatic uses of* **faire:** **ne fait rien à** (314), has nothing to do with; **peu fait à** (711), little subject to; **c'en est fait** (1223), 'Tis all over; **pourquoi faire** (753), for what purpose? **faits** (1558), constituted.

se faire, to be done (1659); to be made, to be paid (822); to acquire for oneself (625); to happen, to occur (877); **— aimer,** to be loved; **elle se fait aimer** (232), I love

her; — **voir** (768), to present oneself; — **paraître** (238), to show, manifest itself, be apparent; — **honneur** (819), to be honored with, boast of possessing.

faiseur, *m.*, maker; — **de protestations** (44), protestation-monger, i.e. superficial, hypocritical persons.

fait, *m.*, fact, thing, affair, business; **n'est point du tout mon** — (64), is not at all what suits me, i.e. is no friend of mine; **pour la beauté du** — (202), for the beauty, wonder, of the thing; **tout à** — (1348), completely (*see notes* 63–64, 64).

falloir, *impersonal:* to be necessary; need, should, must; *wherever possible avoid the awkward impersonal construction in translation by using an active personal form, thus* (38) one must repay; (149) one needs; (282) we should know each other, *etc.; sometimes a passive is required:* (354) only this weakness is needed; (300) than is customary; (289) if an opening at court must be made; **s'il faut** (169, 1771), **s'il fallait** (1199), if it should happen, if it should chance, if it were fated (*see notes* 169, 1199, 1771); as I should (434); why must I love you (514).

fameu–x, –se, signal, remarkable, famous, illustrious (1058).

faquin, *m.*, rascal, good-for-nothing fellow, scoundrel (*see note* 52).

fat, *m.*, fool, coxcomb, fop, snob, contemptible fellow (*the direct opposite of* **honnête homme** *as seen in* 48) (*see notes* 47–48, 48).

fatal, deadly, fatal (1384).

fatigant, wearisome, boresome (576).

fatiguer, to weary, bore (1033).

fausset, *m.*, falsetto; squeaking, high voice, *much affected by the dandies of that day* (487).

fausseté, *f.*, treachery, falsity; falsehood (1494).

faute, *f.*, fault.

fauteuil, *m.*, arm-chair.

fau–x, –sse, false.

faveur, *f.*, courtesy, favor (915).

favorable, favorable; endearing, pleasant (716).

feindre, to dissemble, pretend, feign (422); to scruple, refuse, hesitate (1592).

feint, simulated, feigned, assumed, false (1115).

feinte, *f.*, deception, concealment, disguise (302).

femme, woman (850, 1344).

fer, *m.*, iron; *in plural, poetic for* bonds of love, chains, fetters, bondage (1784, 1790).

ferme, curtly, haughtily; **parler** — (431); steady! go to it! (651).

fermer, to close, shut; — **les yeux** (226), to blind.

feu, *m.*, fire; *pl.*, **feux,** *poetic for* love (249).

fidèle, faithful (970).
se **fier,** to trust (192).
fi–er, –ère, proud.
fièrement, haughtily, proudly.
fierté, *f.*, pride.
figure, *f.*, appearance, figure; **faire — auprès de** (290), to enjoy the favor of, have some hearing with; **faire — de savant** (793–794), to pose as a critic, wear a wise face.
figuré, figurative; metaphorical; **plaisamment —** (*see note* 1435).
fin, *f.*, end.
fin, elegant, graceful; **taille fort —e** (798), very graceful figure.
finir, to end (1667).
fixer, to retain, hold; attract permanently (1012); attach (1713).
flamme, *f.*, flame; love, passion (233, 306, 1354).
flandrin de vicomte, *m.*, (*see note* 1690, 9); *portrait of, by Célimène* (1690, 9–15).
flatter, to flatter, encourage (306); **se —** (826), to flatter oneself, be deceived.
flatterie, *f.*, flattery.
flatteu–r, –se, flattering, deceitful (655).
flatteur, *m.*, flatterer.
fléchir, to yield, bend (156).
flegme, *m.*, placidness, phlegm, self-possession, tranquillity, calmness (166–168) (*see note* 166).
fleurette, *f.*, pretty speech, gallant remark, compliment (*see note* 509).
fleuri, flowery, florid, gaudy; **pompe —e** (415), flowery pomposity, showy glitter.
foi, *f.*, faith, fidelity, loyalty, truthfulness; **ma —** (182, 434), (by) my faith!; **prêter —** (907, 1676), to attach belief, give credence to, believe; **manquement de —** (1355), my lack of faith; **faire — de** (1127), to show proof, convince of; **de bonne —** (967), in good faith, with sincerity; *in* 1418 **foi** *seems to mean* love (*see note* 1418); assurance, trust, confidence (1490); honor, integrity (1495); **m'en faire —** (1580), give me proof of it, convince me of it.
fois, *f.*, time (*once, twice, etc.*); **mille —** (453); **à la —** (1487), at one (and the same) time.
folie, *f.*, foolishness, folly.
fond, *m.*, depth, bottom, innermost *or* deepest part; **le — de votre âme** (1677), your inmost heart; back part of the stage, **au —,** back-stage, background; **au —** (905), at bottom, after all, in the main.
fondement, *m.*, ground, reason (1231).
fonder, to base, found; **se —** (57), to be founded, to be based; to base one's argument, justify oneself (549).
fonds, *m.*, stock, fund, basis (477); subject of conversation (612).
force, a great many (1264); **à — de** (150, 590), because

of too much (many), through excess of.

forfait, *m.*, crime, wickedness, villainy (1499).

forger, to invent, contrive, devise (1521).

former, to mould, form; create (1171); formulate, frame, utter, express (1424).

fort, *adj.*, strong, powerful (193).

fort, *adv.*, strongly, loudly; very; much (476, 974, 1063); emphatically (895); greatly (249); — **bien** decidedly, well in favor (823).

fortement, strongly (1404).

fortune, *f.*, fortune (1610).

fortuné, *m.*, favored one (836).

fou, fol, folle, mad, crazy (1391).

fouiller, to search, feel.

foule, *f.*, crowd (889).

fourbe, deceitful (176); rascally, knavish; *m.*, *f.*, cheat, imposter, tricky person (135, 726).

fourberie, *f.*, deceit, trickery, cheating.

fracas, *m.*, uproar, noise, racket, applause (795).

frais, *m. pl.*, costs (816, 822).

franc, franche, frank, open; **tout** — (105), quite frankly; arrant, out-and-out, downright, arch; — **scélérat** (124, 1532), arch rascal; —**s marquis** (1098), arrant marquis; **franche grimace** (854), pure, mere, hypocrisy, nothing but cant.

franc, *m.*, franc (*French money*) (1547).

franchement, openly, honestly, frankly (376).

franchir, to overleap, cross over, pass over, overcome (1405).

franchise, *f.*, frankness, plain speaking.

frapper, to strike; — **ma vue** (698), to strike my eye; **vous** — **les yeux** (1076), to appeal to you, attract your attention, strike your fancy.

fréquent, constant, frequent (933); repeated (1291).

frère, *m.*, brother (100).

frivole, empty, meaningless, frivolous.

froid, lifeless, cold (353); *m.* cold weather (611).

froideur, *f.*, coldness (808).

front, *m.*, effrontery, impudence, boldness, face, 'cheek' (320, 1504, 1553).

fuir, to avoid, flee from; scorn (1239).

fureur, *f.*, frenzy, passion, fury, ardor (20).

G

gagner, to win, gain (486); acquire the right (544); to move toward, to reach, some point on the stage.

gaillard, spirited, dashing, gallant, cavalier-like (790).

galant, elegant, courtly, smart (325); — **homme** (345, 1114, 1146), gentleman, well-bred man, man of good judgment; man of honor (*apparently equivalent to* **honnête homme,** *see note* 48).

galanterie, *f.*, coquetry, love-

making, gallantry, love. *Apparently the meaning is flexible, since both Arsinoé and Célimène apply it to the latter's conduct* (890, 977) (*see note* 887, 890).

galerie, *f.*, corridor, hall-way, entry; perhaps a picture-gallery (732).

garant, *m.*, pledge, guarantee (1399).

garde, *m.*, guard, officer of the Marshalls' Court (748) (*see note* 743).

garder, to keep, retain, maintain; — **des mesures** (142), condone, compromise, temporise, show forbearance *or* indulgence; — **le silence** (182, 1666), to keep silent; **se** — (430, 1542), to be careful not to, guard against, take care that something shall not occur.

gâter, to spoil, ruin (360).

gauche, left.

gazette, *f.*, the court gazette (*see note* 1074).

géante, *f.*, giantess, excessively tall woman (723).

se **gendarmer,** to flare, bristle up; get unduly excited, provoked *or* angry, to storm, rail, be up in arms (684).

gêne, *f.*, torment (*almost* torture), anguish, embarrassment, constraint (*see note* 1629).

se **gêner,** *compare* **gêne;** to be disturbed, constrained; to embarrass oneself.

général, general, universal, shared by all (118).

généreu–x, –se, noble, valiant, lofty (1379).

genre, *m.*, kind; — **humain** mankind, humanity.

gens, *m., f. pl.*, people, persons; associates, friends, companions (60); servants (*see note* 940); **honnêtes** — (*see note* 48), gentlemen; — **à la mode,** men of fashion; **tous les autres** — (644), every one else.

gentil, –le, nice (*ironical*) (510).

Géralde, *m., portrait of, by Célimène* (595–602).

gloire, *f.*, honor, reputation (1142); pride, vanity, conceit, vainglory (*see note* 1017); (wounded) vanity (1518); **faire** — (1376), to boast of, glory in.

glorieu–x, –se, glorious, flattering, honorable, (haughty, vain? *see note* 55–56); admirable (*ironic*) (1694).

gonflé, puffed up, swollen (618).

gouffre, *m.*, gulf, pit, den, abyss (1804).

goût, *m.*, taste; fashion, fancy (976); **à mon** — (630), in my mind, to my thinking.

goûter, to enjoy, taste.

goutte, *f.*, drop, bit (of sense); **ne . . .** — (581, 1454), not a bit of sense, nothing (*see note* 1454).

gouverner, to control, direct, govern (1312).

grâce, *f.*, charm, grace (233); favor, concession, graciousness (1155); mercy, pardon (31); —**s** (913), thanks; **de**

— (435, 530, 1061), I pray you, in mercy's name; **de mauvaise** — (33), out of place, unseemly, in bad grace; **faire — à** (31, 146), to show mercy, indulgence, to pardon.

grand, great, big; tall (434); grand, lofty, solemn (307); strenuous (519); **au — soleil** (578), in the broiling sun; deep (837; *note unusual position after the noun*).

grand'basque, *f.*, long coat tail, flap, skirt (746) (*see note* 201).

grand'chose, *f.*, a great deal (*see note* 201).

grand'ville, *f.*, great city (394, 406) (*see note* 201).

gras, –se, stout, fat (720).

grave, serious, solemn, grave (927).

gré, *m.*, opinion; **à mon** — (871), in my opinion; thanks; **savoir . . . —** (1647), to be grateful.

griffonné, scrawled, scribbled (1451).

grimace, *f.*, grimace, grin; fawning smile, smug, hypocritical, grinning face (137, 1497); **franche** — (854), pure hypocrisy, mere cant; *in* 589 *there is not necessarily any suggestion of hypocrisy.*

gronder, to complain, grumble, groan.

grondeu–r, –se, scolding, faultfinding, quarrelsome (528).

grossi–er, –ère, coarse, unpolished, uncultured (390); palpable, clear (1349).

grouiller, to budge, stir, wriggle (*see note* 616).

gué (*see note* 399).

guindé, stuck up, on stilts, on his high horse (635).

H

* denotes aspirate **h**

***ha,** *m.*, an exclamation of approval, applause; ah! *usually invariable but given a plural* **s** *in* 796 *because of the rhyme* (*see note* 796).

habile, clever, intelligent, smart, knowing, (637).

habit, *m.*, dress, garb, attire (1449).

***haine,** *f.*, hatred, hate, contempt (121).

***haïr,** to dislike, hate.

***hasard,** *m.*, chance; **par** — (169), perchance.

***hâte,** *f.*, haste, hurry; **en** — (654), at once.

***hâter,** to hurry (1032).

***haut,** *m.*, height, loftiness,

***haut,** high, lofty, openly, outloud (750); **tout** — (695), publicly, openly; **de — en bas** (1020), haughtily, contemptuously, superciliously; **prenez-le . . . moins** — (433), "soften your tone somewhat" (Eggert), be less haughty about it; **portez-le moins haut** (1729), carry your head less haughtily (*see note* 1729).

***hautement,** loud, outloud; **de parler** — (544), to speak loud enough to get a hearing,

to speak with authority; openly (1215); stoutly, truly, resolutely (1616).

***hauteur,** *f.*, height, loftiness; — **d'estime** (931), exaggerated self-esteem; **à la — de,** on a level with.

***hé,** eh! ha! (338, 435).

hélas! alas!

héroïque, courageous, heroic (1166).

heur, *m.*, good fortune, happiness (*see note* 476).

heure, *f.*, hour; **un quart d'—** (313), a quarter of an hour; time of day (615).

heureu–x, –se, lucky, happy (873).

***heurter,** to run counter to, against; to clash with (154).

hier (*one syllable: see note* 885), *m.*, yesterday (885, 1068).

histoire, *f.*, history, story.

hommage, *m.*, offering, honor, homage (1793).

homme, *m.*, man; **honnête —** perfect gentleman (*see notes* 48, 370); **galant —** (345), *see* **galant**; **— du monde** man of the world (*in a good sense*).

honnête, honorable, genuine, worthy, excellent, meritorious, genuine; **— homme** (*pl.*, **—s gens**) perfect gentleman (*see notes* 48, 370); **plus —s gens** (624), best people, highest society, smartest people.

honnêtement, graciously, considerately, civilly, courteously (292).

honnêteté, *f.*, honor, decency, virtue (905); honesty, fairness (1511).

honneur, *m.*, honor, sense of honor; reputation (134); distinction (677); modesty (1403); **se faire — de** (819), to be honored with, boast of.

***honte,** *f.*, shame; **faire —** (1338), to (put to) shame.

***honteu–x, –se,** disgraceful, shameful.

horreur, *f.*, horror, disgust; abomination, hideousness (1554); **faire —** (1251), to fill with horror, to horrify.

***hors,** outside; **— de** (1136), from, away from; except (1140); out of, outside of (578); **— d'état** (1208), unable; **— de saison** (1623), out of place, unreasonable; **— que** (769), unless, except.

humain, human; **genre —** mankind; **les —s** *m. pl.* (144), mankind, men.

humble, humble (438).

humeur, *f.*, mood, disposition, humor, spleen, melancholy; **— noire** (91), deep melancholy, fit of melancholy; conduct, character, disposition (457); temperament (1082, 1176) (*see note* 1176); purpose (1654); **— coquette** (219), coquettishness, coquetry.

hymen, *m.*, marriage (1207).

I

ici, here, this point; now (9, 512, 519, 696) *cf.* **là** (1623);

this locality (128); = Célimène's house (806, 823, 843).

idolâtre, very fond, foolishly fond (793).

idolâtrie, *f.*, idolatry, madness; **avec —** (1715), with adoration, as he would a divinity; madly.

il, he, it, there; **— me prend** (143), there seizes hold of me; **— est,** *etc., used in poetry for* **il y a,** *etc.* (*see note* 53); *used for modern* **cela,** that, it (304, 557, 558, 878, 1099, 1120); **qu'il** *used often for* **qui** (748, 1368, 1555).

imaginaire, fictitious, invented, trumped up (1513).

s'imaginer, to look for, anticipate, imagine (1186).

immobile, motionless.

immortel, –le, unquenchable, undying, everlasting (1550).

impassible, unmoved, calm.

impertinence, *f.*, absurdity, nonsense, sophistry (181).

impertinent, *m.*, fool, scoundrel; **— au diable** (1473), you devilish fool (scoundrel).

impertinent, foolish, silly, irrelevant (*see note* 690); intolerable, insufferable (*see note* 872).

importance, *f.*, weight, importance (881).

importer, to concern, to be of importance (880); *impersonal:* **il n'importe** (194. 1417), it matters not, I do not care, never mind.

importun, obtrusive, untimely, unseasonable, importunate (1609).

importuner, to weary, bore, annoy, importune (540, 737).

imposer à, to deceive, impose upon (128).

impossible, impossible; **il m'est —** (557), I cannot.

imposture, *f.*, lie, slander, imposture (1506).

imprimer, to print; **vous faire —** (364), to get yourself into print, to rush into print.

imprimeur, *m.*, publisher, printer (371).

impunément, with impunity (1406).

imputer, to ascribe, charge against, impute (1527).

incartade, *f.*, foolish virulence, "outburst of invective" (Spencer) (102).

incertain, undecided, uncertain (1622).

incertitude, *f.*, suspense, wavering, hesitation (1642).

incivilité, *f.*, discourtesy, impoliteness (1040).

incliner, to direct, incline (1174).

incroyable, beyond belief, extraordinary, incredible.

indécence, *f.*, impropriety, indecency (929).

indifférent, *m.*, an indifferent person, one who is neither friend *nor* enemy, one for whom you care nothing (*see note* 24).

indigne, base, scandalous, shameful, unworthy, abject.

indubitablement, inevitably, unquestionably (452).

infâme, dishonorable, base, contemptible, infamous.

infidèle, *m., f.*, faithless one (1230).
infidélité, *f.*, faithlessness (1130).
ingrat, ungrateful (1249, 1380).
ingratitude, *f.*, ingratitude.
iniquité, *f.*, wickedness, iniquity (1549).
injure, *f.*, insult, wrong, injustice, injury (1263).
injurier, to insult (710).
injuste, unjust, unfair.
injustement, unjustly (489).
injustice, *f.*, wrong, unrighteousness, injustice.
innocence, *f.*, purity, innocence (930).
innocent, harmless, innocent (934); guiltless (1387).
inquiéter, to fret, worry, alarm (778); **s'—** (1797), to worry oneself.
insigne, noteworthy, remarkable, striking (1545).
s'insinuer, to worm one's way into, insinuate oneself, sneak in (138).
inspirer, to urge, inspire.
instance, *f.*, insistence, persistence (1622).
instant, *m.*, moment, instant; **à l'—** (915), at once, immediately.
instruire, to inform, instruct (750).
insupportable, unbearable (613).
intention, *f.*, meaning, purpose, intention (895).
intéressé, selfish.
intéresser, to win over, to interest (492).
intérêt, self-seeking, selfishness (94, 1556); concern, interest (667); business (1244).
intérieur, *m.*, back of the scenery, behind the scenes, offstage-back.
s'introduire, to gain entrance, mingle, mix (545).
inutile, useless, vain (806); empty (46).
inventer, to think of, find, invent (1371).
irriter, to anger, annoy, incite, irritate (1597).

J

j', *see* **je.**
jalousie, *f.*, jealousy.
jalou–x, –se, jealous (495).
jamais, ever (1372, 1678); **ne . . . — *or* — . . . ne,** never.
jaquette, *f.* jacket, short coat (746).
jasmin, *m.*, jessamine (*see note* 717).
je, j', I.
jeter, to throw, cast (587, 932); **— les yeux** (1324), to glance, look; **se — dans le bel esprit** (*see note* 1690, 28).
jeu, *m.*, play; **— de mots** (387), play on words, playing with words.
jeune, young.
jeunesse, *f.*, youth.
joie, *f.*, joy.
joindre, to unite, join (1207).
joli, pretty (333); **faire la —e** (82), to pose as a beauty, act like a pretty girl.
jouer, to play the part of, act like (1094); deceive, hoodwink, play upon (1088).

jour, *m.*, day; life (1083); **tous les —s** (159), every day.

journée, *f.*, day (*emphasizing its duration*); **de toute la —** (738), all day long.

joyeu–x, –se, happy, joyous, joyful.

juge, *m.*, judge (*see note* 188).

jugement, *m.*, judgment; senses, mind (1316); **mauvais —s** (904), condemnation.

juger, to judge.

juin, *m.*, June. *The first performance of Le Misanthrope was June* 4, 1666.

jurer, to swear, declare under oath, protest.

jusque, even, to the extent of, up to, clear to, until; so far as (25, 1634); as far as (1128); **jusqu'ici** (519), until now, up to the present, hitherto.

jusques, *poetic double form of* **jusque,** *used to secure an extra syllable when* **jusque** *would have to lose its* **e** *in elision; thus* **jusques ici** *in* 9 *for* **jusqu'ici** *and* **jusques au** *in* 594 *for* **jusqu'au.**

juste, fair, just, equitable (821); fit, suitable (1189).

justement, precisely, just so, exactly (552).

justice, *f.*, justice reason; **rendre —** to do justice (257); **tourner la —** to thwart justice (*see note* 1498); **revenir en —** (1539), to appeal to a higher court; justification (1650).

L

l', *see* **le, la,** *article and pronoun.*

la, *article and pronoun, see* **le.**

là, there; **de —** (1013), from that, therefrom; **par —** (351, 967), in that way, thereby, by that, (1070) in that respect; **laissez-moi là** (3, 443), leave me alone; **là** *sometimes means* now, at such a moment (1623) (*compare similar use of* **ici** *in* 9, 512, 519, 696).

là-bas = en bas, below, down stairs (250, 848, 851).

lâche, cowardly (758); weak (1377); ignoble, shameful, base, dastardly, contemptible (25, 41). *A favorite word with Alceste who also uses* **lâchement** (1250) (*see also note* 230).

lâchement, basely, in a cowardly way (1250).

lâcher, to utter, let fall (36); — **la balance** (1665) (*see* **balance** *and note* 1665).

là-dessus, on that subject, on that score (242, 1552, 1590, 1643, 1717); as far as that is concerned (1032); thereupon (1505).

laisser, to leave, let, let alone; leave off, cease (435); leave out, never mind (1061, 1463); allow, permit (1376).

lancer, to throw, cast (1280).

langage, *m.*, talk, word (845); language; **point de —** (443), not another word; **tenir ce —** (1445), to utter such talk.

langoureu–x, –se, languishing, pining, melancholy (308).
languir, to languish (811).
lasser, to fatigue, weary.
laver, to wash; **vous —** (1682), to clear yourself.
le, la, l', les, *def. art.:* the; le *in* 317, 604 *equals* what a! *In the expressions* **de la sorte** (506, 1372, 1630, 1776), *and* **de la façon** (204), *the* **la** *means* this, that, *and the whole phrase may be rendered* such, so; **un aveu de la sorte,** such an avowal, *etc. This usage is a vestige of the etymon of the French article, the Latin demonstrative* illam.
le, la, l', les, *pron.:* him, her, it, them; *may replace a previous thought as in* 237 *where* **l' = aimê** (236), *in* 9 *where* **l' = ami** (8), *in* 11 *where* **le = *also* ami,** *in* 454 *where* **le = le contraire** (453), *in* 1690, 42 *where* **l' = extravagant,** *in* 1690, 41 *and in* 1747 *where both* **le = de me haïr** *in* 1746. *In some cases the* **le** *refers very vaguely to the context* (63); **pour le trancher net,** to cut the matter short, (209); **comme il le semble,** as it (so) seems (439); **vous le voyez,** you see the situation; *for* **l'** *in* **l'emporter** (*see note* 140); **prenez-le moins haut** (433), soften your tone somewhat; **portez-le moins haut** (1729), carry it (= your head) less haughtily.
leçon, *f.,* sermonizing, lecture, preaching (933).
lecture, *f.,* reading (1502).
légende, *f.,* explanation (*of the stage-setting*).
légèrement, hastily, lightly, rashly (1232).
légitime, just, rightful, legitimate (1414).
les, *pl. of* **le, l', la,** *art. and pron.:* the, them; **les** *may occasionally mean a possessive* (440), your.
lettre, *f.,* letter; **un mot de —** (1037), a line or two, a few lines.
leur, to them.
leur, their.
levé, *or more modern* **lever,** *m.,* the king's rising (*cf.* **couché** *and note* 567).
lever, *m.,* rising; **au — du rideau,** as the curtain rises.
se lever, to rise, get up.
liberté, *f.,* right, liberty (1806); ease of carriage, grace of movement (719).
libre, free, open, clear (999).
lien (*dissyllabic*), *m.,* bond, chain, fetter, shackle (*see note* 218); *usually found in plural.*
lier, to tie, bind; **nous —** (282), to become friends.
lieu, lieux, *m.,* locality, place; **en tous —x** (133, 467, 853), everywhere; **—x communs** (610), commonplaces of conversation; **—x dévots** (941), places of public worship; **en ce —** (873), here; **au — de** (1253), instead of, in the place of; reason, occasion, cause (301, 499, 504, 824).
lire, to read (1452).

livre, *m.*, book.

loi, *f.*, law, precept, rule, regulation.

loin, far; — **de** (914), far from; — **que,** *followed by the subjunctive* (1533), far from.

loisible (*archaic already in Molière's day and restricted to legal use*), permissible, optional; **il vous est tout** — (558), you may do what you like.

l'on (*used for* **on** *whenever an extra syllable or euphony is desired*) (69, 252, 365, 369, 480, 528, 533, 615, 621); *in* 1069 *euphony is sacrificed to the need of an extra syllable. See* **on.**

long, -ue, long; **très-longue** (813), long drawn out, prolonged, protracted.

longtemps, long, a long time, a great while (255).

longueur, *f.*, length.

lorsque, when.

louer, to praise (326).

loueur, *m.*, praiser, flatterer (*see note* 690).

loup, *m.*, wolf (178, 1523).

Louvre, *m.*, the Louvre, *the royal palace in Paris.*

lui, *conjunctive personal pron. indirect obj.*, to him, to her, to it; in her (226); *disjunctive*, him; it (71); **lui-même,** himself; itself (1182); **à lui** (240), its own.

lumière, *f.*, judgment, discernment, intelligence (281); indication, **hint** (1633); *pl.*, enlightenment, knowledge (294, 570, 1350).

M

m', *see* **me,** me.

ma, *see* **mon,** my.

machine, *f.*, **remuer des —s** (1078), to set intrigue in motion, to pull wires.

madame, *f.*, madam (*see note* 447–448).

maigre, thin, lean, skinny (719).

main, *f.*, hand; handwriting (1332, 1689); **sous** — (870), secretly, in an underhanded manner; **tenir la —, donner la** — to escort a lady (*see notes* 1128, 1690, 16); **donner (prêter) les —s** (1388, 1761), to help, aid, consent (*see note* 1388); **prendre en** — (674), to espouse, adopt; **avoir . . . en —s** (1079), to have in hand, at beck and call.

maintenant, now.

mais, but; **puis-je — de** (994), can I help, am I responsible for (*see note* 994).

maison, *f.*, house, home.

maître, *m.*, master; king (802).

majesté, *f.*, majesty.

mal, ill, badly, bad; badly off (1438); amiss (914); *as a negative prefix sometimes attached to the word it negatives as* **malpropre** *in* 721, *more often separated as in* **mal propre** (298; *see notes* 298, 721); **mal satisfait** (448), ill-satisfied; **mal venu** (800), foolish, ill-advised; **mal tourné** (809), ill-favored; **mal adressée** (1661), ill-directed.

mal, maux, *m.*, ill, wrong, evil, harm; **vouloir — à** (1411), to be angry with; **vouloir un grand — à** (113), to be greatly incensed with; **tout le — qu'on lui veut** (1267), all the anger one has against her.

maladie, *f.*, sickness, malady, disease; morbid temper (105).

malfaisant, perverse, wicked, mischievous, malevolent (178).

malgré, despite.

malheur, *m.*, misfortune, bad luck (429); failure (1636); **pour mon —** (1318), to my misfortune.

malheureu–x -se, afflicted, wretched, unhappy; *m. pl.*, wretches, unfortunates (366).

malice, *f.*, meanness, malice (1536).

malpropre, careless and inelegant in dress; slovenly; dowdy (*see note* 721).

maltraité, wronged, perverted (1543); ill-used, mistreated (833).

mander, to summon, bid (752).

manier, to manage, bend (*see note* 1133).

manière, *f.*, respect (1146); style, manner, way (427).

manquement, *m.*, lack (1355).

manquer, to lack (788).

maraud, *m.*, rascal, booby (1448).

marchandise, *f.*, article of merchandise, commodity (1727).

marché, *m.*, bargain, agreement (284).

marcher, to walk; come, follow (318); **— par** (1556), go on, proceed, depend upon.

maréchal, maréchaux, *m.*, marshal (*see notes* 743, 752).

maréchaussée, *f.*, the Marshalls' Court (English 'marshalsea') (748), a court for regulating affairs of honor (*see notes* 743, 752).

mari, *m.*, husband.

marque, *f.*, indication, proof (1545); **— certaine** (841, 1606), convincing proof.

marquer, to foretell, presage, prophesy (1289).

marquis, *m.*, marquis (*title of nobility between duke and count*), young lord (*in Molière usually a ridiculous young, foppish fellow*); **francs —** arrant young lords (1098).

martyre, *m.*, torture, martyrdom (605).

masque, *m.*, mask, disguise.

se masquer, to hide, disguise, mask oneself.

matière, *f.*, matter, subject (886); theme (428); cause, occasion (1434).

maudit, cursèd, accursèd, damned.

mauvais, bad, wretched; **— personnages** ridiculous rôles (*see note* 350); **— jugements** (904), condemnation.

me, me.

méchamment, wickedly, maliciously (1506).

méchanceté, *f.*, wickedness, villainy (1546).

méchant, bad, wicked, weak;

shocking; wretched (389, 429, 629, 755, 764); ugly (901); —**s bruits** (171), ill reports, slander.

médisance, *f.*, calumny, slander (946).

médisant, slanderous, evil-speaking, backbiting, malicious (219).

meilleur, better, (309); best; **du — de mon âme** (1214), from my inmost soul.

mêler, to confuse, mingle, jumble, include; concern; **se —** (158), to busy oneself, meddle; **se — dans** (597), to mingle, associate with; **mêlez-vous de vos affaires** (1234), mind your own business.

même, same; even (645, 866, 1502); *frequently used without definite article which is now required* (1605, 1648, 1655); **de — que** (165), as well as, or; just as (1569); **de —** (1788), in the same way, thus; **soi-même** (618), himself.

menace, *f.*, threat.

menacer, to threaten (1466).

ménager, to spare, to treat gently, cautiously, *or* kindly, to humor (490, 494); — **pour** (1383), to use to one's own advantage, use cleverly, turn to one's own account; to spare, consider (1640); **se —** (1023), to spare, have respect for oneself (*see note* 1023).

mensonge, *m.*, lie, falsehood (1352).

mentir, to lie, speak falsely; **sans —** (874, 1335), really, truly.

mépris, *m.*, scorn, contempt (1379).

mépriser, to scorn, despise, reject (1260).

mérite, *m.*, worth, merit, value, desert, distinction; attraction, charm (814); **son triste —** (859, = *Arsinoé herself*); sense of merit, of his own value (619).

mériter, to deserve, merit; **à —** (1503), deserving.

merveille, *f.*, wonder, miracle, prodigy, marvel (593, 724).

merveilleu–x, –se, wonderful, marvellous (1690, 36).

mes, *pl. of* **mon, ma,** my.

messieurs, *m. pl.*, gentlemen (435).

mesure, *f.*, forbearance, moderation, measure, consideration; **garder des —s** (142); *see* **garder.**

méthode, *f.*, way, method, manner, custom; conduct (41).

métier, *m.*, business; **faire —** (620), to make it a business.

mets, *m.*, dish, food (627).

mettre, to put, place; use (280); list, classify (722); express (325); hide (376); to add (953); — **en pièces** (179), to tear to pieces (*morally*); — **à bout** (1323), *see* **bout;** — **dehors** (464), to drive away; — **aux yeux** (359), to point out, make plain, show; — **du blanc** (942), to paint the face; **se**

— **en peine** (145, 770, 950, 1001), to trouble oneself, to worry, concern oneself, be concerned; **se — en courroux** (172), to become angry; **se — bien** (799), to dress well; **se — dans la tête** (637), to get it into one's head; **se — en tête** (1690), to realize, be convinced.

meuble, *m.*, piece of furniture.

mie, *f.*, sweetheart, darling (*see note* 396).

le mien, la mienne, mine (947).

mieux, better; **le —,** the best; to better advantage (1075); **tant —,** so much the better; **aimer —** (399), to prefer; **valoir —** (955), to be better.

mignon, –ne, dainty, delicate, pretty (509).

milieu, *m.*, centre-stage.

mille, thousand; *merely means a large number* (78).

mince, trivial, paltry, insignificant (1690, 18).

mine, *f.*, face, looks (797, 937, 1449); expression of face, frown (929); **faire des —s** (1077), to give signs (by some expression of the face).

misanthrope, *m.*, hater, despiser of mankind; misanthrope.

mise, *f.*, setting, dressing, dress; **— en scène,** the stage-setting.

misérable, wretched, sorry, miserable (134); *m.*, unfortunate one (836).

mode, *f.*, fashion, mode; **à la —,** in fashion, fashionable, worldly; **gens à la —** (42); men (people) of fashion.

modèle, *m.*, pattern, example, model (377).

modérer, to calm, moderate (1245).

modeste, modest (937).

mœurs, *f. pl.*, customs, manners, morals.

moi, I, me; *disjunctive subj. or obj. pron. accompanying and emphasizing* **je** (5, 353, 422, 438, 703, 731, 739); *used alone* (8, 1769); *accompanying and emphasizing* **me** (1356, 1690, 38, 1700); **pour —,** for my part (209, 243); **à —** (1310), myself, i.e. master of myself.

moindre, less; **la —** (593), the least, slightest.

moins, less; **au —** (475), at least; **le —** (1240), the least; **à — de voir** (737) unless I see; **plus . . . moins** (701), the more . . . the less.

molle, *see* **mou.**

moment, *m.*, moment, minute, instant (535).

mon, ma, mes, my.

monde, *m.*, world, society; everybody (534, 590); **du —** (65), in society, *sometimes merely an intensive addition to a superlative as in* 292 = in the world; **être du —** (855), to be worldly; **tout le —,** everybody; **parmi le —,** in society (149, 1501); **beau —** (481), fashionable world.

monnoie (*earlier form of* **mon-**

naie), *f.*, coin, money (*see note* 37–38).

monsieur, messieurs, *m.*, sir gentleman (*see notes* 262, 602).

monter, to mount, come up stairs (253); go up stairs (1581); **j'ai monté** (*see note* 253); **faites —** (532), show him up stairs.

montrer, to show, reveal (296); display (349); **se —,** to show, reveal oneself (itself), appear; **pour vous —,** to show your worth (1075).

se moquer, to joke, jest; **— — de** (446), to joke, jest with; **vous vous moquez** (87, 565), you don't mean it, you jest.

morbleu, (*euphemism for « mort Dieu »; literally "God's death"*), 'sdeath, zounds, hang it, confound it (*see note* 25).

morceau, morceaux, *m.*, bit, piece, fragment, passage, morsel (319).

mortel, –le, fatal, deadly; mortal (221); *m., f.*, human being.

mot, *m.*, word; **bon —,** witty clever remark, witticism (636); **jeu de —s** (387), play on words, playing with words; **— de lettre** (1037), a line or two.

motif, *m.*, reason, motive (1651).

mou, mol; molle, weak, tame (705).

mourir, to die; **faire —** (605), to kill.

mouvement, *m.*, emotion, movement; violent impulse (143); motive, impulse (911); interest, solicitude, sympathy (1111).

moyen, *m.*, means, way (1323); opportunity (1562).

muet, –te, silent, taciturn (728).

mur, *m.*, wall.

murmurer, to mutter, grumble, (403, 1505); complain (173).

mutuel, –le, mutual (966).

mystère, *m.*, caution, circumspection, reserve, reflection, discretion (278); mystery (1470); strange happening (1437); *adjectival meaning in* 586, mysterious, mystifying.

N

nain, naine, *m., f.*, dwarf (724).

naissance, *f.*, birth, bud, origin (757).

naître, to be born; **veut —** (281, 1298), must spring, arise; **faire —** (1792), to destine.

nature, *f.*, nature; universe (1221); kind.

naturel, –le, according to nature, unaffected, natural (378).

né, born (1384).

ne, not, no; **ne . . . pas,** no, not; **ne . . . plus,** no more, no longer; **ne . . . point,** not, not at all; **ne . . . jamais, jamais . . . ne,** never; **ne . . . rien, rien . . . ne,** nothing; **ne . . . personne, personne . . . ne,** nobody; **ne . . . nul**

(**nulle**), no, nobody; **ne . . . aucun** (**aucune**), no, no one; **ne . . . que**, only; **ne . . . que quand** (260), only when, not until; **ne . . . rien que** (90), nothing but; **ne . . . goutte** (581, 1454), nothing, no sense (*see note* 1454); **ne . . . ni . . . ni**, neither . . . nor (*often with omission of first* **ni** 686, 807, 1512); *in* 1133–1134 *the first* **ni** *is replaced by* **point**); **ne . . . de ma vie** (1524, 1690, 6), never, never in my life. *Note in* 1153–1154 **ne . . . aucune . . . que**, no desire . . . unless. (*See note* 910–911 *for a discussion of a possible peculiar* **ne . . . que** *construction in which the* **ne** *may have been omitted*).

A sufficient negative alone with **savoir** (15, 309, 686, 989, 998, 1307, 1471, 1690, 11) (*when* **pas** *is added there is additional strength* 695, 991, 1172); *with* **pouvoir** (6, 41, 375, 460, 523, 533, 1378, 1690, 30); *with the impersonal* **il n'importe** (194, 1417); *in* **si** *clauses* (1448, 1690, 5); *in subjunctive clauses following a superlative idea* (36, 85, 902, 970, 971, 1154); *with subjunctive after* **empêcher** (1000); *after* **plus . . . que** (1690, 34).

nécessaire, necessary (878).

négligé, careless, neglectful (722).

net, –te, positively, plainly, frankly, flatly (11, 447); clear (*of style*) (310); **pour le trancher** — (63), to cut the matter short, not to mince matters. (*See note* 11, *and, regarding the pronunciation of* **net,** *note* 63–64).

nettement, clearly, frankly (1643).

nez, *m.*, nose (335); **de me dire au** — (1358), to tell me to my face, bluntly (*see note* 548).

ni *in* **ne . . . (ni) . . . ni,** *see* **ne . . . ni . . . ni,** neither . . . nor.

nier, to refuse, deny (814).

noble, noble, of the nobility (784).

nœud, *m.*, bond, tie; relationship (295); **ce —,** marriage (1792).

noir, black, gloomy; heavy (1584); **—s accès,** gloomy fits (*see note* 98); **— chagrin** *see* **chagrin; humeur —e,** (91), gloomy mood, deep melancholy; dark-skinned, swarthy (718); contemptible (1494).

noirceur, *f.*, baseness (1420); black guilt, treason, perfidy (1274).

nom, *m.*, name.

nombre, *m.*, number, crowd (1002).

nommer, to call, name; declare (1113); **se —,** to be named; **comme il se nomme** (22), what his name is.

non, not, no (*see notes* 41, 1779); **— pas** (263, 732), *a strong negation,* by no means;

negatives a following adjective, — **jaloux** (1611); — **que** *followed by subjunctive* (905), not that.

notre, nos, our.

nourrir, to bring up, educate (99); to feed, nourish (661); encourage, foster, nurture (693); cherish, keep (1550).

nouveau, nouvel, nouvelle, *m. pl.,* **nouveaux,** new (525).

nouveauté, *f.,* new play = first performance of a new play (793).

nouvelle, *f.,* news.

nudité, *f.,* nakedness, nudity (943).

nuire, to harm, injure (546).

nul, –le, no; **sans nulle exception** (115), without (any) exception; **nul . . . ne,** *as subj.* (136), no one.

O

o! oh; —**! ça** (839), well.

obéir, to obey.

objet, *m.,* object, thing; *applied frequently to persons:* person (223, 714, 1263, 1380).

obligeant, flattering, agreeable, precise, binding (1397).

obliger, to put under obligation (914, 1112); force, oblige (1030, 1482); induce, persuade, urge, prevail upon (1586).

obscurité, *f.,* uncertainty, obscurity (1687).

obséder, to beset, besiege, surround (459); pester (1690, 46).

observer, to notice, see, observe.

obstacle, *m.,* barrier, hindrance, obstacle (1505); **faire plus d'**— (1707), to be any longer an obstacle.

obstination, *f.,* stubbornness, great reluctance, obstinacy.

obtenir, to secure, win, obtain (814).

occasion, *f.,* opportunity, occasion; **à toute** — (280), on every occasion.

occupation, *f.,* pursuit, occupation (368).

occuper, to trouble, weigh upon, disturb (734); occupy, engage (1138).

occurrence, *f.,* occasion, circumstance, case (1201); matter, affair, subject (1361).

odieu–x, –se, hateful, odious (1226); detestable (1291).

œil, *pl.,* **yeux** (*see* **yeux**), eye; **coup d'**— (587), glance; — **d'envie** (857), envious eye.

offense, *f.,* affront, offence (1217).

offenser, to offend, be hateful to (494); **offensé** (175), shocked; **s'**— **de** (499-1141), to be hurt by, of, fended at.

office, *m.,* service, practice (970).

offre, *f.,* promise, tender of service, offer, proposal.

offrir, to show, reveal, offer, present; **s'** — (288), to offer oneself *or* one's services.

ombrage, *m.,* suspicion, distrust, umbrage; **prendre de**

l'— (489), to have suspicion of, distrust.

ombre, *f.* shadow, suspicion, semblance., mere suggestion (907, 929).

on, l'on (*see* **l'on**), one, a person, anyone, every one, they, you; *although indefinite in form* **on** *is very often quite definitely the person speaking, or spoken to, or of; often such use conveys a veiled touch of irony, scorn, false modesty. for* **je** (232, 818, 987, 1001, 1022, 1024, 1078, 1132, 1133, 1392, 1410, 1723); *for* **vous** (444, 1261, 1291, 1364, 1374, 1375, 1376); *for* **ils** (1135, 1136); *for* **elle** (= Célimène) (837, 1179, 1199); *for* **nous** (56); *sometimes two* **on** *in close proximity refer to different persons,* (56 1179); (*see notes* 56, 355–356, 693–694, 1179 *for discussion of specially interesting cases*).

oncle, *m.*, uncle (631).

ongle, *m.*, finger nail (*see note* 479).

opinion, *f.*, sentiment, opinion (674); **prendre bonne — de** (1690, 13), to think well of.

s'opposer, to object, be opposed to.

or, *m.*, gold; **du d'—** (*see note* 747).

oracle, *m.*, testimony, proof, decision (1406).

ordinaire, ordinary; **pour l'—** (711), usually, ordinarily, generally.

ordre, *m.*, command, order.

oreille, *f.*, ear (*in sense of a person* 85); **dire . . . à l'—** (594), to whisper.

orgueil, *m.*, pride (617).

orgueilleu–x, –se, haughty, proud; *f.*, proud girl (725).

orner, to adorn, crown (1785).

Oronte, *m., portrait of, by Célimène* (1690, 28–32); *by Alceste* (1146–1154, 1505–1516).

oser, to dare, presume (1349).

ôter, to take away, deprive (997); relieve, deliver, free (511).

ou, or (1601).

où, where; in which, within which, toward whom, to which, to whom, at which, wherein; when (1690, 24); **d'—** (221), whence; **partout —** (106), everywhere; *to secure greater flexibility, Molière uses* **où** *more frequently than is now possible for* **à, dans, vers, chez** *with some form of* **lequel**; *for* **à laquelle** (740, 1170, 1174, 1760); *for* **auxquels** (416, 666, 1156); *for* **dans lequel** (117, 214, 249, 968, 1278); *for* **dans laquelle** (207, 265, 931); *for* **dans lesquels** (98); *for* **vers laquelle** (1174); *for* **chez lesquels** (886).

ouais! *interjection of surprise,* oho! (1278).

oubli, *m.*, forgetfulness.

oublier, to forget.

oui, yes.

ouïr, to hear (336, 848) (*defective and mostly obsolete*).

outrage, *m.*, insult, offence, outrage.

outrager, to insult, offend (444).

ouvert, open; **à cœur —** (272, 531), in all sincerity, with all one's heart, frankly, with open heart.

ouverture, *f.*, influence, step to secure a favor, overture, opening (289).

ouvrage, *m.*, production (349); effect (470); work, task (1246).

ouvrir: s' —, to open (458).

P

pâle, pale, pallid (717).

papier, *m.*, paper (1468) (*see note* 8).

paquet, *m.*, parcel, share, bundle (*see note* 1690, 27).

par, by, through, by means of; as a result of (1207); **— qui** (1690, 9), with (about) whom; **— tout pays** (804), in every land; **— là,** thereby (351), in that way (967), in that respect (1070); **— quelle raison** (1329, 1445), why; **— la raison que** (1446) = **parce que,** because; **de —,** in the name of.

paraître, to appear, seem (310); **se faire —** (238), to manifest itself, to be apparent.

parbleu, *euphemistic oath for* « *par Dieu,* » zounds, egad, by Jove (236, 445, 781, 807) (*see note* 25); assuredly, indeed.

parce que, because.

pardon, forgiveness, pardon (1515).

pardonner, to excuse, pardon (365); condone (702).

pareil, –le, like, such; **ses —s** (542), men like him.

parent, –e, *m.*, *f.*, relative (1249).

parer, to deck out, adorn (1701).

parfait, perfect, complete; **—e raison** (151), soundest reason.

parfois, sometimes, at times, occasionally.

Paris, Paris (394).

parler, to speak; **— net** (447), to speak frankly; **— hautement,** *see* **hautement.**

parleur, *m.*, talker, gabbler (579).

parleuse, *f.*, talker, chatterer, over-talkative woman, chatterbox (727).

parmi (*used then with singular quite often*), in, in the midst of (149, 1501).

parole, *f.*, word.

part, *f.*, share, part; **de ma —** (269, 1645), for my part; **pour ma —** (1638), as far as I am concerned, for my part; **d'autre —** (355), otherwise, on the otherhand; **autre —** (432), elsewhere, (1413), to some one else; **à —,** aside; **de toutes —s** (1893), on all sides, by everybody; **ne prendre point de — à** (1712), not to care for.

partage, *m.*, share; **en —** (423), as your share.

partage, to share (1612).

parti, *m.*, side, decision, choice; **prendre —** (565, 893, 1369,

1625), to come to a decision, make up one's mind, take side; **en prendre le** — (979), to decide to use, to justify the use of.

particuli-er, -ère, singular, particular, peculier; **faire un cas — de** (1164), to esteem highly.

partie, *f.*, opponent in lawsuit, litigant (183); *portrait of Alceste's opponent, by Alceste* (124–140, 1487–1504); pleasure party, entertainment (1690, 35).

partir, to depart, go away; come from (36, 1263).

partout, everywhere; — **où,** *conj.* (106), everywhere.

pas, *m.*, step; **revenir sur mes** — (775–776), to return at once; **faire un** — (191), to take any step, do anything.

pas: ne . . . —, not; **non** — (263, 733), *by no means.*

passe, *f.*, arch, hoop (*of certain games*); **être en** — (*see note* 786).

passer, to pass, pass away, pass by, cease (529); to move, cross (*of actors on the stage*); — **sur** (1680), to overlook, forget; **en passant** (587), as he goes by; **se** — (1554), to occur, happen, go on; **se — de** (426) (*cf.* 425, **se — que** + *subjunctive*), to get along without; (1117), to forbear, refrain, abstain from; dispense with.

passion, *f.*, love, passion.

patience, *f.*, forbearance, patience (566).

pauvre, unfortunate, poor; sorry (*see note* 604).

payer, to pay (940); repay, recompense (1720); to put off (1740).

pays, *m.*, country, land; **par tout** — (804), everywhere; **ce** — (1090), the court.

péché, *m.*, sin (520).

peindre, to depict, describe, picture (650).

peine, *f.*, difficulty, trouble, penalty, forfeit; **avec** — (869), with difficulty; **sur — de la vie** (1154), on penalty of losing one's life; **à** — (22), scarcely, hardly; **se mettre** (*or* **être**) **en** — (145, 770, 874, 1001, 1621), to trouble oneself about, be concerned; **valoir la** — (1690), to be worth while.

penchant, *m.*, inclination, liking, leaning, taste, affection (215, 1174, 1614).

pencher, to lean, incline (1395).

pendable, hangable, deserving of hanging (29, 772).

pendant, during.

pendre, to hang.

pénible, difficult (1134).

pensée, *f.*, opinion (1510); thought, mind (1662).

penser, to think; — **de,** to think of, have an opinion of.

percer, to pierce, strike through and through, stab (1311).

perdre, to lose.

père, *m.*, father.

perfection, *f.*, perfection.

perfide, faithless, false, treacherous (1249).

perfidie, *f.*, perfidy, treachery.
péril, *m.*, danger, peril (1465).
permettre, to allow, permit.
permis, allowable, permissible, permitted; **peu —e** (74), objectionable.
permission, *f.*, leave, privilege, licence (1532).
perruque, *f.*, wig (482).
persécuter, to torment, persecute (1653).
personnage, *m.*, character, rôle, personage (350, 1094).
personne, *f.*, person, personality; **ne . . . —, — . . . ne,** nobody (134, 524).
se **persuader,** to imagine (1690, 42).
pervers, perverse, unprincipled, vile.
perversité, *f.*, corruption, wickedness, depravity (1485).
peste, *f.*, plague, pestilence; **la — de** (334), plague take!
pester, to curse, fulminate, rail, inveigh (620, 1548).
petit, petty, small, short, tiny, little; simple (308); **—s brillants** (*see* **brillant** *and note* 1018); **— couché** (*see* **couché** *and note* 567).
peu, *m.*, want, lack (814, 1559); **— d'équité,** injustice; **un — de** (573), a little, a short; trifle, a small thing (235); **un —** (53, 146, 183, 433, 900), a little, somewhat; *preceding adjectives* **peu** *almost negates them:* **— chers** (55), of little *or* no value; **— permise** (74), not permissible, objectionable; **— fait** (711), little subject; *in* 146 **un —** *seems equal to* **un peu de; depuis —** (296), a short time ago; **pour — que** (1077), however little; *as adverb of quantity:* few, a small quantity *or* number (721, 786).
peur, *f.*, fear, fright; **faire —** (389), to cause fright, to alarm, frighten.
peut-être, perhaps, possibly (337).
Philis, *f.* (*see note* 317).
philosophe, philosophical (97, 166) (*for modern* **philosophique**).
philosophie, *f.*, philosophy, equanimity (1562).
pièce, *f.*, piece, block (616).
pied, *m.*, foot; **de la tête aux —s** (586), from head to foot.
pied-plat, *m.*, low-bred scoundrel (*see note* 129).
pierre, *f.*, stone.
se **piquer,** to pride oneself on, glory in (1165).
pirouette, *f.*: **faire une —,** to whirl around on one foot, (*stage-directions* 566, 696, 798).
pis, worse (*for* **pire**) (1452); **tant — (205),** so much the worse.
pitié, *f.*, pity, mercy; contempt (648); condescension (932); **sans —,** mercilessly.
place, *f.*, spot, place; field (436); **sur —,** (694*d*) in one's place, from one's chair; **demander —** (274), to ask a place; **faire —** (843), to yield place, make way, leave a clear field.

placé, placed, located.
plaiderie, *f.*, lawsuit, litigation (*see note* 197).
plaindre, to pity; **se —,** to complain (1051).
plainte, *f.*, complaint (301, 1301, 1414).
plaire, to please (748); **s'il vous plaît** (261), please, with your leave, I pray you (1243).
plaisamment, comically, amusingly, funnily, ridiculously (1435).
plaisant, amusing, diverting, funny (774); ridiculous, impertinent (1357).
plaisanter, to jest, joke (1286).
plaisanterie, *f.*, jest, pleasantry (33).
plaisir, *m.*, satisfaction, pleasure (196).
plan, *m.*, division of the stage-floor; ground, groove; distance, perspective; **premier —,** foreground; **deuxième —,** second (middle) ground; (**fond** *is the usual designation of* background).
plat, flat; **pied-—** (*see* **pied-plat** *and note* 129).
plat, *m.*, dish (of food), course (629).
plein, full, complete; unreserved, absolute (207); **à —** (125, 1543), fully, completely.
pleinement, fully, utterly, wholly, completely (1275).
pleurs, *m. pl.*, tears (812).
plier, to bend, fold, wrap, pack; **— bagage** (1446), to pack up one's belongings, be off bag and baggage, to pack up and be off.
plissé, plaited (746).
pluie, *f.*, rain.
plupart, *f.*, majority, greater number, most.
plus, more; **la — forte** (233), the stronger; **le —,** most (140, 880); **ne . . . —** (175), no more, no longer; *by itself* **plus** *may be a complete negation* (1642); **— de société** (442), no more dealings with you; **— . . . moins** (701), the more . . . the less.
plutôt, rather; **bien —** (1287), far rather.
poche, *f.*, pocket (1236).
poids, *m.*, weight, authority, power, influence (953, 1497); importance (1068).
point, *m.*, point, degree, subject, matter; **à tel —** (111), to such a degree; **au dernier —** (939), to the last degree; to the uttermost, most; **ne . . . —,** not at all, *or merely an emphatic* not (87); **— d'âme** (53) no soul; **— du tout,** not at all; **— de langage** (443), not another word; **— d'affaire** (554), no, no, not at all, it's useless; *by itself a vigorous* no, not at all (564).
pointillé, dotted.
poison, *m.*, poison (1318).
politique, *f.*, policy (979); artifice, shrewdness.
pompe, *f.*, pomp, show, pomposity, lofty style; **— fleurie** (415), flowery pomposity, showy glitter.

pompeu-x, -se, noble, majestic, stilted, pompous (307).

port, *m.*, carriage, manner of walking, bearing (720).

porte, *f.*, door, entrance; — **d'appartement,** door leading to other rooms; — **allant au dehors,** door leading to house-entrance; — **à deux battants,** double door, folding door.

porter, to bear, wear; bring (1275); lead (1760); support, endure (1690, 46); — **une haine mortelle** (221), to hate mortally; — **un air** (572), to have an appearance; **portez-le moins haut,** assume a less lofty attitude, don't carry your head so high (*see note* 1729).

portrait, picture, portrait, sketch (649); image (1694) (*see notes* 81, 559–742). *References to the various portraits may be found under the names.*

possible, possible; *m.*, **tout mon** — (517), all I can.

postérité, *f.*, future generations, posterity (1544).

posture, *f.*, position, situation, standing, footing (1534).

pour, for, because of (1018 1020); in favor of (1662); — **vous** (339), as for you; (681), on your side; — **moi** (29, 209, 243, 945), for my part, as for me; *before infinitives*, to, in order to (*see in this connection note* 60); *the infinitive clause is often causal* (120, 439, 1331, 1516); — **être** (120), because they are (*see note* 120–121); — **ne point écrire** (358), to urge him not to write; — **l'ordinaire** (711), usually, generally; **tourner** —, to apply (*see note* 1353); **d'avoir** — **agréable** (30), to consent, permit, agree; — **quoi faire** (753), for what purpose?

pourquoi, why (299).

poursuivre, to continue (1666).

pourtant, nevertheless (1012).

pourvoir, to provide, endow; **pourvu** (697), endowed.

pourvu que, provided (that) (739).

pousser, to push, force, carry (1028); drive; continue to direct (682); fall upon, attack, provoke, insult (990); — **à bout** (328, 1375), to drive to extremities; — **une affaire** (789), to carry on an affair of honor, a duel; — **des soupirs** (806), to heave sighs; **soupirs poussés** (1279), deep-drawn sighs; **poussez** (651), thrust hard, keep it up; — **jusqu'au bout** (1754), to carry to the utmost extreme; **se** — (130), to elbow one's way in, push oneself forward, foist oneself.

pouvoir, *m.*, power, ability, capacity (767, 1059); **en** — (454), able.

pouvoir, to be able, may, can; **je ne puis** (6), I cannot; **peut-être,** perhaps; **puis-je mais,** can I help it (*see note*

994); **s'il se peut** (1387), if possible; **cela se peut** (1116), that may well be.

précaution, *f.*, caution, prudence, precaution (551).

préférable, superior, preferable (269).

préférence, *f.*, choice, choosing, preference.

premi-er, -ère, first; **le —,** first; **tout des —s** (7), among the very first; **— venu** (458), first comer.

prendre, to take, seize (346); find (782); choose (212); assume (371, 945); take up (678); form (1776); espouse (1719); **— de l'ombrage de** (489), to distrust; **— en main** (674) to adopt, espouse, support, defend, maintain; **— souci** (1244), **— part** (1712), to be concerned, to trouble oneself; **— une résolution** (1481), **— parti** (565, 1625), to make up one's mind, come to a decision; **— le parti de** (979), decide to use; **— soin** (627), to take care; **— des soins** (1658), to pay court to; **— congé** (1029), to take leave; **— bonne opinion de** (1690, 13), to think well of; **— un dessein** (1776), to undertake a plan; **prenez-le un peu moins haut** (433), pitch your tone a little lower, don't take quite such a haughty tone (*see note* 433); **il me prend** (143), there seizes hold of me, I am seized with; **se — à** + *infinitive* (1684), to undertake to; **se — à** (665, 993), **s'en — à** (657, 1304), to hold responsible, accuse, blame.

près de, close to (*in stage directions*); in his relations with (1185).

présence, *f.*, presence; **en — de** (1632), before, face to face, point-blank.

présent, *m.*, present; **à —** (1779), now.

présenter, to offer, show, present, grant (471); **se — à** (1790), to offer itself to, aspire to, ask for.

préserver, to keep, forbid, preserve (906).

presque, almost.

pressant, urgent, pressing (363).

pressé, urgent (745).

presser, to hasten (1216); to prompt, urge (1605).

présumer, to assume, imagine, hope, suppose, believe (1295).

prêt, ready, willing (534, 1750).

prétendre, to wish, intend (915, 1640); claim (266); **y —** (1615), **—** (1594), to aspire to, court (*see note* 1053 *for discussion of a peculiar case; see also note* 266).

prétendu, presumptive, preferred, future, accepted (*see note* 843).

prétention, *f.*, affectation, assumption of qualities one does not possess, presumptiousness.

prêter, to lend; **— foi** (907,

1676), to attach belief, give credence, trust, believe; — **les lumières** (570), to enlighten; — **les mains** (1388), to help.

preuve, *f.*, proof (830).

se **prévaloir,** to presume upon. glory in, boast of (988).

prier, to beg, request, pray.

prince, *m.*, **princesse,** *f.*, prince, princess (598).

prise, *f.*, handle, hold; **donner** — (904), to give occasion, afford matter.

priser, to value, esteem, care for (391).

privé, deprived, bereft, devoid (1350).

prix, *m.*, price, value (818).

probité, *f.*, justice, honesty, integrity, probity (1488).

procédé, *m.*, method, conduct (1711).

procédure, *f.*, proceeding, affair, procedure (1162).

procès, *m.*, lawsuit (124).

prochain, *m.*, neighbor (583).

prodigieu–x, –se, vast, wonderful (1383).

produire, to cause, produce (1176); to reveal, disclose, expose, show clearly (1238).

profaner, to desecrate, dishonor, profane (279).

profession, *f.*, declaration, profession, avowal; **faire** — (9), to profess. avow.

profitable, useful, well-meant (910).

profiter de, to take advantage of, profit by (1190); **y** — **de** (1705), to be richer by, regain thereby.

profond, deep; bitter (91); —**e vertu,** genuine virtue.

profondeur, *f.*, depth.

promettre, to promise (275).

prompt, quick, hasty (1525).

promptement, promptly.

prononcer, to declare, proclaim (1656).

propice, favorable (1049).

propos, *m.*, talk, discourse (*see note* 645–646); **à** — (877), opportunely; **à tout** — (705), on all occasions, at every turn; **fort à** — (1671), quite fittingly.

proposer, to propose; **se** —, to plan, purpose, have in mind (1808).

propre, suitable, proper, fit; **mal** — (298), ill-qualified, ill-fitted (*see note* 298).

prose, *f.*, prose (1690, 31).

prostitué, debased, corrupted, prostituted, lavishly bestowed (54).

protestation, *f.*, declaration, promise, profession.

prude, prudish, prim (216); *f.*, prude (853, 861, 984) (*see note* 216).

prudence, *f.*, wisdom, skill, discretion, diplomacy (1138).

pruderie, *f.*, prudishness, affectation, prudery (925, 978) (*see note* 216).

public, *m.*, public; **exposer au** — (297), to publish, make public.

publier, to spread abroad, publish (918); proclaim (1489).

pudeur, *f.*, modesty, decency (728, 1488).

puis, then.

puisque, since, because.
puissance, *f.*, control, power (1297).
puissant, powerful, strong (1265).
puits, *m.*, well (1690, 12).
punir, to punish; **se —** (1272), to despise oneself.
pur, mere, pure, sheer; **de —e honte** (14), for very shame; **— amour** (702), true love.
purger, to purify, purge, cleanse, cure (234).

Q

qu', *see* **que.**
qualité, *f.*, characteristic, quality (355); rank, noble birth, standing (259, 1147).
quand, when; *with conditional tense,* even if (691); **ne ... que —** (260*d*), not . . . until.
quant à, as for.
quart, *m.*, quarter; **— d'heure** (313), quarter of an hour.
quatre, four.
que, *relative and interrogative, see* **qui;** what (606, 998); which, whom, that; *see* **ce qui, ce que.**
que, *adv. of comparison,* than, as (43, 177, 392); *adv. of quantity* (1440).
que, *conj.*, that; when (49, 1184); while (616); and yet (454); except (1508); without (= *sans que*) (622, 654); *repeats a previous conjunction and must be followed by the subjunctive* (395, 407; *see note* 395); unless (1154); until (1042); how (33, 325, 489, 515, 1649); *see* **ne ... que, ne ... que quand; ne rien que,** only (90), nothing but; **que** *forms conjunctions with many prepositions:* **avant que, parce que, depuis que, etc.; que** *precedes the logical subject in constructions introduced by* **ce** + *some form of* **être** (*see note* 58, *and list of cases under* **être**); *this* **que** *is the same syntactically as the second* **que** *in such expressions as* **qu'est-ce que;** *see in* 379–383 *the repetition of the* **que;** *such* **que** *cannot be translated; note the peculiar case in* 1360 (*see also discussion of a doubtful* **que** *in note* 910–911).
quel, -le, what! what? (835); what a (201); *used for* **qui** *to avoid hiatus* (*see note* 21).
quelque, some, a little; a, an (875); **quelque chose** (1166), something; **— + que +** *subjunctive,* whatever (133, 227, 547, 1541); **— +** *adj.* **+ que +** *subjunctive,* however (817).
quelquefois, sometimes (1183).
quelqu'un, someone, somebody (838), some man (856).
querelle, *f.*, quarrel; some other person's interest, cause (1719); **faire —** (526), to quarrel with.
quereller, to quarrel with, attack, reproach (455, 1374).
qui, que, dont, *relative pron.*,

who, whom, whose, that, which; **de qui** (219), whose; **qu'il,** *for modern* **qui,** which, that (748, 1368, 1555); whoso, whichever one, if one (*see note* 841); **qui** *for some form of* **lequel** *and referring to things* (*a use no longer permitted*): **à qui** (= **auquel**) (626, 1676); **de qui** (= **duquel, dont**) (1502); **qui** *for modern* **celui qui** (205, 432, 469, 1089); **qui** *for modern* **ce qui** (1393, 1475); **qui** *with a short relative clause is often best rendered by the present participle:* **qui murmure** (1505), grumbling.

qui, que, *interrogative pron.,* who? what? whom? **qui** = *modern* **qu'est-ce qui,** what? (364, 828) (*see note* 828). *In* 852, 1227, *the* **qui** *may be either modern* **qu'est-ce qui,** what?, *or modern* **qui,** who?

quitter, renounce, give up, abandon (102, 369, 1262); **se — la main** (*stage-directions*), to release hands, cease to hold the hand.

quoi, *relative,* what; **de —** (1695), something; wherewith (1132); **a de —** (506), ought to; *interrogative,* **à — bon** (937), to what purpose? of what good? what is the use of? **sur —** (1053), on what basis? **pour — faire** (753), for what purpose? (*see note* 444 *for an uncertain case of* **quoi**).

quoi que, whatever (161, 229, 549); **de — —** (369), in whatever way, no matter how.

quoique, although.

R

race, *f.,* family, lineage, race, house (86).

radouci, softened, sweetened, honeyed.

rage, *f.,* anger, wrath (1310); rage, madness, rabidness.

raideur, *f.,* severity, austerity (153).

railler, to ridicule, make sport of (663).

raillerie, *f.,* jesting, raillery (834).

raison, *f.,* judgment; theory (1177); reason, right; **avoir —** (192, 687), to be (in the) right; **en avoir —** (1287), to have cause to; **ce n'est pas la —** (820), it is not reasonable, it is not just; **faire —** (1217), to help avenge, make amends for.

raisonnable, sensible, reasonable (909); justifiable (1743).

raisonnement, *m.,* reasoning, argument, talk.

raisonner, to talk logically, argue, reason (167, 1483).

raisonneu–r, –se, one who wants the last word, arguer, tiresome talker (577).

ramasser, to heap up, concentrate, bestow exclusively (500).

ramener, to bring, escort back (456).

rang, *m.*, position, post, station (785).
ranger, to arrange, place in order.
rappeler, to recall; **se —** (1224), to control itself, to be calm.
rapport, *m.*, report; **faux —** (1529), slander; **— d'humeurs,** congeniality of dispositions, conformity of characters.
s'en rapporter à, to follow somebody's opinion, refer to (707).
rapprocher, to bring nearer; **se —,** to approach; **se — d'un pas,** to move a step nearer.
rare, extraordinary (516, 817); rare (1167).
rasseoir, to reassure, calm, appease, tranquillize (497).
rattraper, to free, snatch away, rescue (515).
rayer, to efface, strike off, cross out (*see note* 8).
réalité, *f.*, actuality, reality (944).
rebut, *m.*, rebuff, repulse, refusal (834, 1095); **le — de madame** (1727), what madam casts aside, my lady's cast-off lover, my lady's leavings; **le — d'un cœur** (1794), what a heart has cast aside (*see notes* 1727, 1794).
recevoir, to accept, receive.
reconduire, to escort (1040*d*).
reconnaître, to acknowledge, repay, show gratitude for (915).
recourir, to have recourse (1349).
recours, *m.*, refuge, recourse, remedy (329).
se **recouvrir,** to put on one's hat again.
se **récrier,** to applaud, admire, shout out in approval (416).
rectitude, *f.*, integrity, uprightness, rigid moral standard (205).
reculer, to draw back; **— d'un pas,** to move back one step; to postpone (744).
redescendre, to come downstage again.
redire, to criticize, find fault with, object to (357, 641).
redoubler, to increase, redouble (1273).
redouter, to fear, dread (1240).
réduire, to reduce; **se —** (670), to submit, limit oneself, conform.
refus, *m.*, refusal, rebuff (1201).
refuser, to reject, refuse; **se —** (217), to deny oneself to, object to, withstand, shun.
régal, *m.*, relish, delight, charm, pleasure (*see note* 55–56).
regard, *m.*, look, glance; consideration, precaution, attention (*see note* 538).
regarder, to look, glance, behold; look upon, judge (356); **se —** (951), to scrutinize oneself.
régler, to govern, rule, regulate; **se —** (377), to model oneself, take as a model.
régner, to prevail (1485).
regorger, to stuff, overflow, be surfeited with (1073).

regret, *m.*, sorrow, vexation, regret (28).
rejeter, to reject, refuse, repulse, scorn, despise (260).
rejoindre, to rejoin.
remettre, to deliver, put (1340); postpone (1038); **s'en** — (955), to leave the matter to, to entrust it.
remonter, to move up-stage (*away from the foot-lights*).
remplir, to fill (1036).
remuer, to move, stir; set in motion (1078).
rencontre, *f.*, case, circumstance, occasion (69); meeting; **aller à sa** — (654), to go meet him.
rencontrer, to encounter, find (1292).
rendre, to repay, return (*see note* 66); to make, render (211); restore; show (1016, 1387); — **soins** (867, 994, 1016); to pay attentions; — **visite** (626), to pay a visit; — **un arrêt** (1657), to declare a decision; — **justice** (257), to do justice; — **coupable,** (461), to hold guilty; — **les armes** (469), to surrender, pay homage; **se** — (481), to yield, surrender.
se **renfermer,** to enclose, intrench, shut oneself, retire (207).
renoncer à, to renounce, relinquish, banish (708).
renverser, to overthrow, upset (1498).
se **répandre,** to yield to, indulge in, abandon oneself (666).
réparer, to repair, atone for, made amends for (1430).
repartie, retort, sharp reply (962).
repas, *m.*, repast, dinner, feast (630).
repasser, to cross again (*of actors on the stage*).
se **repentir,** to repent (284).
répondre, to answer; answer for, be responsible for (1314, 1575); to equal (1771).
reporter, to remove, change (*of stage furniture*).
reposer, to repose; **se** — (1490), to rely, rest assured.
reprendre, to take back (398); to blame, reprove (645, 961).
reproche, *m.*, reproach, taunt, blame (658, 1274).
reprocher, to blame, reproach (1690, 2).
répugnance, *f.*, aversion (1202).
résidence, *f.*, stay, sojourn, abode (1090).
résister à, to reject, refuse, resist (276, 367).
résolu, firm, resolute, resolved.
résolution, *f.*, resolve, determination (1481); decision (1602).
résoudre, to resolve, settle; **se** — (1200), to consent.
respectueu–x, –se, full of respect, worshipful (1256).
ressembler, to resemble (361).
ressentiment, *m.*, anger, resentment (1308).
reste, *m.*, rest, remainder; **au** — (312), besides.
rester, to stay, remain.
retenir, to hold, keep, detain;

fascinate, bind (468); stay (847); prevent (1651).

se **retirer,** to withdraw (1573).

retomber, to fall, descend, be transferred (1212).

retour, *m.*, turning back, retreat, receding, relenting (1270).

se **retourner,** to turn.

retraite, *f.*, retreat; **faire —,** to beat a retreat (*see note* 1441).

retrouver, to find again (574).

réussir, to succeed (1086).

revenir, to return (776); **y — en justice** (1539), to appeal to a higher court; **— à** (1690, 11), to please, suit a person.

révérence, *f.*, bow, greeting, salutation.

rêverie, *f.*, dream, revery (260*d*).

revêtu, clothed, apparelled (131, 1564).

rêveu–r, –se, dreamy, thoughtful (260*d*).

revoir, to see again, meet once more (573).

rhingrave, *f.*, a kind of knee-trousers (*see note* 485).

ri, *m.* (*for* **rire**), laugh, laughter (659).

riant, charming, smiling, encouraging (471).

riche, rich (*of rhyme*), not simple *or* complex; **pas —,** simple (*see note* 401).

rideau, *m.*, curtain.

ridicule, ridiculous, laughable (754); *m.*, ridiculous person (108); **— achevé** (568), complete fool, consummate idiot.

rien, *m.*, anything (303, 1043, 1053, 1284, 1371, 1612); anybody (1640); **ne . . . —** (58), nobody; **ne . . . — que** (90), nothing but; **— . . . ne** (318, 380, 513), **ne . . . —**, nothing (43); **— du tout** (1612), anything at all, aught.

rieur, *m.*, laugher (414).

rigoureu–x, –se, severe (892).

rigueur, *f.*, severity, sternness; rigor of the law (1503); indifference (811).

rime, *f.*, rhyme (401).

rimer, to rhyme, write poetry (363, 1153).

rire, *m.*, laugh, laughter.

rire, to smile (138); laugh, mock, joke (741); **— de** (98), to laugh at; **se —,** laugh (*see note* 203).

rival, rivaux, *m.*, rival (239).

roi, *m.*, king (= Louis XIV) (290).

roideur (*modern* **raideur**), *f.*, rigidity, inflexibility.

rompre, to break; interrupt (591); to change, prevent, thwart (1808); to separate, break off relations, become estranged (450); **— en visière** (*see note* 96), *some of the translations of this expression are:* attack openly; face the issue directly; go full tilt against; declare outright; make open war upon; to give one's opinion bluntly (*same expression in* 1634); **— la tête** (1370) (*literally* to split my head), to harass, vex, bother, exasperate.

rond, *m.*, ring, circle, bubble (1690, 13).
rougir, to blush.
roulement, *m.*, rolling.
rouler, to go on, go, pass, occur, move; **comme tout roule** (1005), how things go, "how the world wags" (Spencer).
ruban, *m.*, ribbon (*see note* 484); —s **verts** (*see note* 1690, 20).
rude, hard, severe.
ruiner, to lose, ruin, destroy (1227).
ruse, *f.*, trick, device, subterfuge, deceit, craft (1349).

S

s', *see* **se, si.**
sacrifice, *m.*, offer, sacrifice (1258).
sacrifier, to sacrifice (1594).
sage, wise (*see note* 152); discreet, sensible (633); — **dehors** (938), outward modesty.
sagesse, *f.*, discretion, virtue, wisdom (928).
saison, *f.*, season, proper time (977); **de —,** seasonable, fitting, *à propos* (688); **hors de —** (1623), unseasonable, out of place.
sale, dirty, dishonest (130); vulgar.
saluer, to bow to, greet.
salut, *m.*, bow, greeting, salutation.
salutation, *f.*, bow, greeting.
sang, *m.*, blood (1800).
sangbleu, *f.*, *euphemistic oath for* « sang Dieu, » God's blood, zounds (773); *the word is usually feminine by analogy with* « par la mordieu » (mort Dieu), « par la têtedieu » (*see note* 25).
sans, without; — **que** (*followed by the subjunctive* 180, 1183, 1634), without.
satire, *f.*, satire, irony (682).
satirique, satirical (661).
satisfait, contented (777), satisfied, content; **mal —** (448), dissatisfied.
sauf, except.
sauter, to leap, jump; — **aux yeux** (572), to strike the eye, be very conspicuous.
sauvage, fierce, untamed, wild, savage.
sauver, to save (863); **se —,** to escape.
savant, knowing, learnèd, clever (641); **faire figure de —,** *see* **figure** (794), to act the connaisseur.
savoir, to know, know how, be able, can; contrive, manage (893); to learn (250); *in negative conditional:* cannot, can't; **ne saurait s'excuser** (15), cannot be pardoned; **je n'y saurais que faire** (998), I can't help it (*see also* 513, 1690, 11); — **fort bon gré** (1647), to be very grateful; **faire —** (1123), to let one know; **ne** *may be sufficient negation with* **savoir** (*see* **ne** *for cases*).
scandaleu–x, –se, scandalous (1493).
scandaliser, to shock, offend,

scandalize (83); **s'en**—(16), to be offended, shocked, scandalized.

scélérat, rascally, villainous; *m.*, rascal, scoundrel, villain.

scène, *f.*, stage, scene.

se, s' (*with reflexive verbs*), himself, herself, itself, oneself; *often untranslatable when reflexive is rendered as a passive* (15, *etc.*)

sec, sèche, dry (604).

second (*sound* **c** *as* **g**), second, next (*see note* 157); **ardeur sans** —**e** (521), unequalled, unparalleled love.

seconder (*sound* **c** *as* **g**), to support, second.

secours, *m.*, help, succor.

secret, secret (832); personal (911); *m.*, secret, secret power (488).

seigneur, *m.*, lord (596).

seing, *m.*, signature (1331).

semblable, such (511).

semblant, *m.*, imitation, simulation, make-believe, pretence, sham, semblance (68, 1701).

sembler, to seem, appear; **que vous semble?** (617), what think you?

semer, to sow, scatter abroad, spread.

sens, *m.*, sense (403); reason (564); senses, feelings, heart, (1212).

sensible, acute, keen, cruel (1541, 1783), "sore offence" (Page).

sentiment, *m.*, feeling, opinion (1136); obstinacy (1156); **d'un commun** — (936), by common consent, with one accord, unanimously.

sentir, to feel (225); **se — de,** to feel conscious of (*see note* 1082).

[**seoir**], *an old infinitive obsolete even in Molière's time:* to be fitting; **il sied mal,** it is unseemly (*see note* 82).

se **séparer,** to part, separate.

sérieu–x, –se, serious.

sérieusement, really, truly, sincerely.

serment, *m.*, oath, solemn declaration, promise.

serrer, to tighten, tie, contract, conclude (1778).

service, *m.*, service.

servir, to be of service, to serve (546); **se** — (628), to serve oneself up; **se — de** (1382), to use.

serviteur, *m.*, servant (656); *in bitter ironical sense* (438); **je suis son** — (1151), I refuse, I beg to be excused.

ses, *pl. of* **son, sa,** his, her, its.

seuil, *m.*, threshold.

seul, single, alone; **votre — mérite** (1006), your merit alone.

seulement, merely, only.

sévère, severe, inexorable, cold, frigid (810).

sexe, *m.*, sex; **le beau** — (802), the fair sex; *in* 1403 — *alone means* women.

si, s', if; whether (198, 309); **si . . . ne,** unless; *in* **que si** (515), *the* **que** *seems to be* how, *though some editors consider* **que si = si.**

si, so.

siècle, *m.*, age, century, time; — **d'aujourd'hui** (1167), nowadays.

siège, *m.*, chair, seat (560).

signe, *m.*, indication, sign.

silence, *m.*, silence; **garder le** — (182), to keep silent.

simplicité, *f.*, folly, simple-mindedness (1411).

sincère, honest, frank, sincere.

sincérité, *f.*, frankness, sincerity (340); truthfulness (1165).

singe, *m.*, monkey.

singularité, *f.*, peculiarity, singularity.

singuli-er, -ère, remarkable, sterling, exceptional, unusual, rare (885); peculiar, unique, eccentric (1163).

sitôt, so soon (1628).

situé, placed, disposed; **un peu bien située** (53), "with a particle of self-respect" (Spencer), somewhat superior in pride.

sobriété, *f.*, moderation, soberness, sobriety (*see note* 152).

société, *f.*, society, dealings; **plus de** — (442), no more dealings with you.

soi, himself, herself, itself; oneself (804, 908); **de** — (1055), in itself; **en** — (1166), in itself; **sur** — (721), as to her person.

soif, *f.*, thirst, craze (360).

soi-même, himself (618 *for modern* **lui-même**); oneself (951).

soin, *m.*, care, attention, effort; anxiety (1605); **avoir** — (700), to take care; **prendre** — (505, 949, 1206), to take pains; *oftenest in plural:* homage, attention, assiduities (*to a lady whom one loves*) (813, 867, 1239, 1256, 1636, 1658); duty, conduct (923); coaxings, wheedlings (1293); efforts, pains (330, 855, 1043, 1293, 1551).

soleil, *m.*, sun; **au grand** — (578), in the broiling sun.

solide, honest, trustworthy, steadfast; staunch, reliable, faithful (245).

solitude, *f.*, loneliness, solitude, abandonment (862).

solliciter, to entreat, plead, ask justice, solicit, work hard (186).

sombre, dark, ill-boding, gloomy (1280).

sommer, to urge, induce, call upon (369).

son, sa, ses, his, her; one's (26).

songer, to think (952).

sonner, to sound; **faire** — (986), to blaze abroad, boast of, vaunt, proclaim, emphasize.

sonnet, *m.*, sonnet (*see note* 296).

sort, *m.*, lot, fate, fortune, career; chance, favor of chance (475).

sorte, *f.*, way, manner; such: **un aveu de la** — (506, 1630), such an avowal; **un dessein de la** — (1776), such a plan; **de la** — (1372), in such a way, so; **de** — (*probably for* **de la sorte**) (541), in such

a way; **de cette** — (1517), of such stuff as that.

sortir, to go, to leave a house (251); to come out (261*d*); to exceed, transgress the limits of, depart from (386); to cease talking about (*see note* 596); — **d'une maison** (783), to be descended from a family.

sot, sotte, foolish, stupid (629, 1411); *m.*, *f.*, silly dunce, foolish girl (726).

sottise, *f.*, nonsense, rubbish, silly thing (326).

souci, *m.*, anxiety, concern, care (511); **prendre** —, to be concerned, to trouble oneself, take pains.

se **soucier de,** to care for.

soudain, sudden.

souffrir, to permit, allow (1479); admit; endure, tolerate (164, 1521); **dont vous souffrez visite** (889), whose visits you permit.

souhait, *m.*, wish, desire (1424).

souhaiter, to desire (997).

soulager, to relieve, comfort (315).

se **soumettre,** to submit, yield (420).

soumis, submissive, agreeing (704).

soupçon, *m.*, suspicion (1232).

soupir, *m.*, sigh.

soupir, to sigh (1731).

soupirant, *m.*, sighing lover (474); admirer (1015).

sous, under, beneath; by (1448*d*); with (99); — **main** (870), secretly, underhandedly.

soutenir, to maintain, insist (417); support, sustain (1352); explain, face, justify, defend (1684).

souvent, often.

spécifier, to specify, explain in detail (1467).

splendeur, *f.*, magnificence, lustre, splendor.

stérilité, *f.*, barrenness (607).

stupide, dull, stupid (609).

style, *m.*, literary style (309); tenor, contents (1334).

sublime, superior, exalted, lofty (477, 1045).

succès, *m.*, outcome, result, issue (195, 1491) (*see note* 195).

suer, to perspire, sweat (606).

suffire (*impersonal*), to be sufficient, to suffice (421, 506, 1464).

suffisance, *f.*, self-sufficiency; conceit, assumption, assurance (431).

suite, *f.*, courtship, suit, sequence (813); duration, continuance.

suivant, according to, following (976).

suivre, to follow (445); follow out, pursue, fulfil, act on, carry out (1795).

sujet, *m.*, cause, reason (780, 1746).

superflu, wasted, superfluous (1551); unnecessary (1718).

supplier, to beg, request, pray.

suprême, highest, supreme, chief (709).

sur, on, upon; concerning, regarding, with regard to (31, 689, 756, 895, 1053); over

(1574); *for modern* **sous,** on (1154); from, in competition with (140); against (992).

sûr, certain, sure; undeniable, complete (1288).

surprendre, to amaze, astonish, surprise.

surprise, *f.*, surprise, astonishment.

surtout, above all, especially.

suspendu, uncertain, wavering, hesitating (1627).

sympathie, *f.*, sympathy; affinity of soul (*see note* 1177).

T

t', *see* **te.**

table, *f.*, table (1474); food (626).

tableau, –x, *m.*, picture, painting (943).

tâcher, to try, endeavor; *usually with* **à** *before a following infinitive;* **tâcher à** *seems to express a greater effort than* **tâcher de** (171, 861, 1224); *yet in* 1506 *we find* **tâcher de,** *because* **à** *would have caused hiatus with* **appuyer.**

taille, *f.*, build, cut, figure (807); shapeliness, slender waist, slim figure (719); **la — fort fine** (798), very elegant figure.

taire, not to mention (343); **se —** (563), be silent, hush!

talent, *m.*, talent, merit (1087).

tandis que, while, whilst (218).

tant, so, so much, so many; **— mieux** (109), so much the better; **— pis** (205), so much the worse.

tantôt, just now (755); recently, this morning (1160).

tapis, *m.*, carpet.

tard, late; **tôt ou —,** sooner or later (*see note* 452).

tarder, to delay; **sans —** (1764), at once.

se **targuer,** to pride oneself, plume oneself, boast of (*see note* 985).

te, *see* **tu.**

tel, –le, such, so (283, 1390); **Messieurs tels** (1096), messrs. so and so; **Madame une telle** (1097), madam so and so.

téméraire, rash, reckless, without judgment, ill-balanced, blinded (690).

témoigner, to show, manifest, reveal; to prove (884).

témoin, *m.*, proof, testimony (1288, 1326, 1336, 1635, 1679).

temps, *m.*, time, age, day; **les mœurs du —** (107), present day customs; **beau —** (611), fair weather; **un —,** a pause (*in the dialogue*).

tendre, tender (308); kindly (1111); **billet —** (1686), tender missive.

tendre, to extend, hand.

tendresse, *f.*, fondness, affection, tenderness, love; **— d'âme** (866), weakness.

tenir, to hold, stand, hold out against; to have, possess (222); to receive (1432); to judge, consider (269, 1146, 1696), utter, use (581, 1445), keep, detain (578); to restrain (1475); **y —** (95), to

endure; — **à** (529, 969, 1195), to depend upon; — **la bride,** to hold a tight rein on (*see note* 347); **se — à** (1540), to abide by it; **me — pour dit** (1646), to take for granted.

tentation, *f.*, temptation.

tenter, to try, attempt (855); to strive to win (1209).

terme, *m.*, expression, word, way (325); **les —s que voici** (1360), the following words (*which he is about to quote*).

terre, *f.*, earth (1805).

terrible, awful, terrible (518).

terriblement, fearfully, frightfully (986) (*see note* 901).

tête, *f.*, head; **à la —** (1073), at one's head; **— à —** (533), privately.

têtebleu, zounds, great God! *euphemistic oath for* « tête Dieu » God's head (140) (*see note* 25).

théâtre, *m.*, stage, theatre (*see note* 794).

Timante, *m., portrait of, by Clitandre and Célimène* (585–594; *see note* 585–594).

tirer, to draw (660); deduce (1013); **se — de** (1486, 1560), to withdraw from, shun.

titre, *m.*, title, epithet.

toi, *see* **tu.**

tomber, to fall, drop, subside, vanish; cease, grow cold (23); — **d'accord,** *see* **accord; faire — l'entretien** (924), to cause the conversation to turn to.

ton, *m.*, tone of voice; — **de fausset** (487), falsetto voice, *see* **fausset.**

tort, *m.*, wrong; injury; **à —** (1755), wrongfully; **avoir —** (192), to be wrong; (1739), to be in the wrong; **avoir grand —** (1728), to be greatly mistaken; **faire — à** (900, 1038), to wrong, harm, injure.

tôt, soon; **— ou tard,** sooner or later (*see note* 452).

toucher, to touch, move one to emotion; concern (883); — **son goût** (638), to please his taste; **touchez-là** (275), shake hands.

toujours, always, forever.

tour, *m.*, turn (652, 732); trick (1531); **— à —** (1702), by turns, in turn, in sequence; **faire le —,** to cross in front of, go around; **faire deux —s** (732), to stroll up and down a few times.

tourné, turned; **mal —** (809), ill-favored, inelegant, ungainly, awkward.

tourner, to turn, transfer; to write, fashion (336); to move, influence (1135); to spread (1536); to apply, adapt (1353); — **la justice** (1498), to thwart, pervert, distort justice.

tout, *m.*, all, everything; **rien du —** (1612), anything at all, aught; everybody (1071).

tout, *adj.*, **toute; tous, toutes,** all, every, whole; **tout l'univers** (56), the whole universe = everybody; **tout le monde** (58), everybody;

tout ce qui (211), **tout ce que** (78, 126, 242, 492), everything, all; **tous les hommes** (118), all men; **tous les jours** (159), every day; **tous deux** (840), both; **de toutes les manières** (293), in every respect; **toute mon envie** (1799), my whole desire; **tout mon possible** (517), all I can.

tout, *adv. of intensity* (*see notes* 28, 390, 1188); all; very (7); quite (404, 1188); — **à fait** (1188, 1348) (*in* 7, 558, **tout** *apparently is equivalent to* **tout à fait**); entirely, wholly (240, 558, 1588); — **à l'instant** (28), that very instant; — **de bon** (102, 203), really and truly, seriously; — **des premiers** (7), among the very first; — **haut** (695), openly, publicly; — **autant** (508), just the same, just as much; *when modifying an adjective or noun* **tout** *is variable in the seventeenth century, showing the same gender as the adjective or noun:* **tous grossiers,** all unpolished [as they were] (*see note* 390); **toute nouvelle** (525), quite new; **toute bonne** (726), all goodness; **toute mon amie** (1113), though she be my friend; **tous prêts** (1323), all ready; **toute abandonnée** (1418), wholly abandoned.

trace, *f.*, trace, footstep; *pl.*, example (982).

trahir, to betray; hide the truth from (303); treat falsely (1512); prove faithless to; — **son âme** (26), to falsify one's real belief, belie one's self-respect.

trahison, *f.*, treachery, betrayal, perfidy, treason; falsity, lie (1495).

train, *m.*, rate, speed, pace, gait (584); luxurious mode of living (1149).

traîner, to drag on (614).

trait, *m.*, shaft, arrow (660); deed, action, stroke, blow (1251, 1709); sign, wicked feature (1758); wile, trick (1347); treasonable act (1676); *pl.* (1324, 1687), handwriting.

traitable, pliant, manageable, docile, forbearing, tractable (149).

traité, *m.*, agreement, bargain (339).

traiter, to act (967); — **de** (24, 510), to describe as, make a person out to be.

traître, perfidious, deceitful, treacherous (1320, 1384); *m.*, traitor; scoundrel (1456, 1463, 1493, 1524).

traîtresse, *f.*, traitress, faithless woman (1415, 1747).

trancher, to cut; **pour le — net** (63), to cut the matter short; to decide, to speak out (1620).

transport, *m.*, angry feeling, emotion, passion, wrath (1245, 1277); *this word was even then being replaced by* **emportement.**

travailler, to labor hard; **se**

— (636), to make desperate efforts.

travers: de — (1143), amiss; **au** — **de,** through (125).

trépas, *m.*, death (329) (*poetic*).

très-longue, long drawn-out, prolonged (813).

très-rare, exceptional (922).

treuve (*old form of* **trouver**) (*see note* 225–226).

triomphant, triumphant (1494).

triompher de, to triumph over (1218).

triste, sad, sorrowful (317); slight, petty, sorry (859).

troisième, third.

tromper, to deceive, betray; **se** —, to err, be mistaken.

trompette, *f.*, trumpet, noise; **sans** — (1442), silently, stealthily, without flourish of trumpets.

trompeu–r, –se, false, deceitful, treacherous (1276).

trop, too; too much, too many; too long (1521); only too well (1689).

trouble, *m.*, perturbation, agitation, disquietude (1278); *plural same meaning* (1289, 1789).

troubler, to disturb, excite, worry (1327).

trouver, to find, see, perceive, think, consider; permit; to call on (1675); receive (1307); — **à redire** (357), to find something to criticize; — **bon** (419), to allow, admit; **venir les** — (752), to come before them, into their presence; **treuve** (*see note* 225–226); — **à dire,** to find wanting, to miss (*see note* 1690, 34); **se** — (1671), to be; to stand (*on the stage*).

tu, te, t', toi, thou, thee; *use of*, (*see note* 1).

tuer, to kill (1318).

tutayer (*for modern* **tutoyer**), to 'thou' and 'thee' a person, to talk familiarly, to be on familiar terms with a person (*see note* 601).

U

un, une, a, an; one; some (27); *Molière frequently omits the definite article where now it is required:* **cœur** (1372), *for* **un cœur,** *etc.; inversely he uses the article when it is now not necessary:* **par** — **malheur** (*for* **par malheur** *see note* 27); — **jour** (982), some day; **les uns** (119), some; **l'— et l'autre** (1693), both of us.

union, *f.*, agreement, compact, union (281); match (1732).

unir, to unite, join (1196); **uni à** (174), united to, joined with, inherent in.

univers, *m.*, universe, world, society; **tout l'—** (56, 266, 495, 496), everybody, everybody else.

usage, *m.*, custom, usage, convention; use (966).

user, to treat; **en** — **avecque moi** (291–292), to treat me; **j'en use** (1511), I deal with him; — **de** (1357), to assume.

V

vain, useless, vain; false (72); **en —** (609), vainly; **faire la —e de** (1002), to boast of, glory in, be vain about.

vainqueur, *m.*, victor (844); conqueror, master (1300).

valet, *m.*, servant, valet; **— de chambre** (1074), body servant, private domestic; **je suis votre —** (437), I am your servant (*see note* 436–438).

valoir, to be worth; to equal (1794); **— assez la peine** (1690), to be quite worth while; **— mieux** (955), to be better; **— bien mieux** (402), to be worth far more.

vanité, *f.*, pride; vanity, boastfulness, boasting (1690, 15); **faire — de** (385), to boast of, be so proud of.

vanter, to vaunt, boast of, extol (712).

vaste, great, immense, vast.

vautour, *m.*, vulture.

velours, *m.*, velvet.

vendredi, *m.*, Friday.

vengeance, *f.*, revenge, vengeance (1254).

venger, to avenge (1249); **se —** (1722), to seek vengeance, to avenge oneself.

venir, to come; **— de** + *infinitive: to have just done the action represented by the infinitive:* **— de voir** (10), to have just seen; **— d'entrer** (873*d*), to have just entered; **en — à bout** (856), to succeed; **d'où vient** (221, 238), how (whence) comes it (*note omission of* **il** *after* **vient**); **mal venu** (800), ill-advised, unjustified, foolish, wrong; **premier venu** (458), first comer; **— les trouver** (752), to come before them, appear in their presence.

venue, *f.*, arrival, coming (1581).

véritable, honest, truthful; sincere (253); *used for* **vrai** (638), true.

vérité, *f.*, truth, naturalness (386); **à dire —** (1187), to speak frankly.

vers, *m.*, verse (307); **petits —** (756), short poem, trifling lines.

vers, toward; *for modern* **envers** (1334, 1343), *where the verse requires only one syllable: note use of* **envers** (1386, 1742). *There was confusion between the two words even in Voltaire.*

vert, green; **l'homme aux rubans —s,** the man with the green ribbons = Alceste (*see note* 1690, 20).

vertu, *f.*, virtue, honor; talent (1085).

vertueu–x, –se, high-minded, virtuous.

veste, *f.*, vest with sleeves, waist-coat (*see note* 1690, 25).

vêtements, *m. pl.*, clothing.

vêtille, *f.*, trifle (593).

veuillez (*from* **vouloir**), please (299).

veuve, *f.*, widow (225).

vice, *m.*, corruption (1760); vice, evil, wickedness.

vicomte, *m.*, viscount (1690, 7).
vide, empty.
vider, to settle, arrange, end, manage (776, 1717).
vie, *f.*, life; **sur peine de la —** (1154), on penalty of death; **ne . . . de ma —** (1524, 1690, 6), my whole life long, as long as I live, never.
vieillir, to grow old (1769).
vieux, vieil; vieille, old (81, 392); old-fashioned, out of date (401).
vif, vive, violent, deep, keen (1274).
vigoureu–x, –se, strong, virile, vigorous (121, 790).
vil, base, vile (326).
ville, *f.*, city (Paris); *in contrast with the court* (*see note* 165).
vingt, twenty (615); *Célimène's age* (984, 1774).
visière, *f.*, visor of a helmet; **rompre en —** (96, 1634) (*see* **rompre** *and note* 96).
visite, *f.*, visit, call (613); **rendre —** (626), **faire —** (921), to visit, to call; **souffrir —** (889), to receive visits.
visiter, to go to see, to visit.
vivre, to live; **pour —** (366), for a livelihood; **bien —** (908), to live uprightly, blamelessly.
vite, quickly (1690, 5).
vivement, hurriedly, quickly.
vœu, vœux, vow; **faire —** (1763), to vow, make a vow; aspiration, wish; *in the plural this word is used in poetry to express some aspect of love or courtship:* aspirations, attentions (217, 1200); inclination (831; 1628 'lover' Giese), love-affairs (839); love (1297, 1619); desires (1777); homage, devoted attentions (997, 1255; *see note* 1255–1258).
voici, here; here is (552); **les termes que —** (1360), the following.
voilà, there; there is; there are; **— ce que** (413), that is what; those are (1285); **— qui va** (374), that is; **vous —** (440), there you have; **et me —** (1348), and now I am.
voile, *m.*, veil (861).
voir, to see, behold; look upon (216); **voyons** (314, 1351), come; **à —** (1005), seeing; **voyons d'arrêter** (531), let us try to stop; to see again (1616); **faire —** (766, 1060), to show, reveal; **se faire —** (768), to present yourself; **j'ai tant vu parler** (1598), I have heard talk so much; **pour voir** *in* 427 *may be an archaism, the* **voir** *being derived from Latin* **verum**; *the expression would then mean 'really,' 'truly,' 'actually'* (*see note* 427).
voix, *f.*, voice; vote, judgment, decision (761).
vol, *m.*, theft; **faire un —** (868), to commit a robbery.
voler, to rob.
vos, your.
votre, your.

vôtre, your own (950).

vouloir, to wish, desire, want; expect, require (152, 155, 206, 556, 670, 1082, 1606); to be eager, anxious (634); to intend (561); to try hard (942); to claim, insist (639, 868, 1298); *sometimes merely a strong volition:* to be willing (1365); **que voulez-vous,** what do you expect; — **dire** (1279), to mean, signify (**vouloir,** *alone* (1436), to mean, signify); **bien** — (1681), — **bien** (304), to be quite willing; **veuillez** (199), please; — **mal à** (1411), to be vexed, angry with; — **un grand mal à** (113), to be greatly incensed with; **tout le mal qu'on lui veut** (1267), all the anger one has against her; **qui veuille de** (54), which will tolerate.

vous, you; you yourself (*see note* 1 *for use of* **vous** *and* **tu**).

voyons, *an exclamation:* come, come! (314).

vrai, true (247); real, regular (1523); own, real (679); **à — dire** (571), **à . . . dire** — (1753), to speak truly.

vraiment, really, truly (413).

vue, *f.*, sight, view; **sa** — (540), the sight of him, his presence; **ma vue** (1673), my presence, my visit; **dans votre** — (1317), at sight of you; **frapper ma** — (698), to strike my eye.

vulgaire, common-place; ordinary (809).

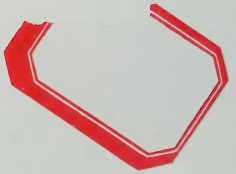
Y

y, there, therein; to it, to this; thereto (646, 716); here (1466); *anticipates a following word or phrase:* **vous y donnez dans ces vices** (59); *refers to a previous idea* (136, 276, 1202, 1654, 1661); *occasionnally refers to persons:* (713, 1615, 1661).

yeux, *m. pl. of* **œil,** eyes, vision, sight; glances (932); **jeter les** — (1324), to look, glance; **sauter aux** — (572), to strike one's attention forcibly; **mettre aux** — (359), to bring to one's attention, to point out, show; **frapper les** — (1078), to attract one's attention; **à leurs** — (112), in their eyes (opinion); **aux** — **de** (200), before; **à vos** — (653), before you; *often used to indicate a women's beauty;* **vos** — (468), your beauty (*cf.* 1021, 1384 *and note* 1015).

Z

zèle, *m.*, zeal, devotion, warmth (328, 912, 960); fidelity (1461); *in* 854, 925, 941 *the meaning is* zeal in matters of religion *with a connotation of* hypocrisy (*see note* 925).



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